

**The impact of literacy-focused CPD on the self-  
perceptions of expertise in primary school  
teachers**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the impact of extended professional development in early literacy acquisition on the self-perceptions and emotions of experienced teachers of 5 to 6 year old pupils. The story of the participants' learning journeys is told through a series of short thematic sections, reflections grounded in critical incident theory and an extended vignette. Teacher-participants expand their knowledge base and modify teaching practice consistent with the specific professional development, though this study is not principally concerned with measures of either of these. Of particular interest is the impact of CPD on the development of participants' self-perceptions in relation to expertise, on their emotional life, and the relationship between these in the drive to attain their learning goals. I hypothesise that positive affect is sufficient to sustain participants through the lowest emotional phases and that these low points can act as catalysts for further theoretical change.

Each participating teacher was enrolled in year-long continuing professional development, either Local Authority led training in systematic, synthetic phonics or Reading Recovery Initial Professional Development (as part of the Every Child a Reader initiative) led by a teacher leader specialist.

Adopting a social constructivist approach I used a range of qualitative research methods to garner data demonstrating the influence of the respective CPD throughout the focus period in 2008-9: a series of semi-structured interviews, lesson observations followed by jointly stimulated reflection and participants' reflective e-journals. I have taken a grounded theory type approach to data analysis.

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own. Word count (exclusive of appendices, list of references and footnotes), but including glossary, diagrams and tables: 44884 words.

*Val Hindmarsh*

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

To my research participants Di, Eva, Heather, Leila, Linda, Kalvinder, Kate and Peter - with grateful thanks for the time, effort and expertise expended on my behalf, and for your openness. Without you there would be no thesis.

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Thank you!

# REFLECTIVE STATEMENT

## Professional background

In September 2005 I moved from my role as a Local Authority Special Educational Needs manager in the North West of England to the post of National Leader within the European Centre for Reading Recovery at the Institute of Education (IOE), University of London. The post commenced with a year of full-time professional and academic preparation including enrolment on the Doctor in Education (EdD).

I was not entirely new to Reading Recovery (RR)<sup>1</sup> having trained as a Teacher Leader during 2003-4. Previous professional posts include primary classroom teaching in Scotland and England, LA Reading Advisory teacher, Speech and Language Unit teacher, Specific Learning Difficulties specialist combined with a management role. My new position as National Leader in RR brought my interests together - literacy learning for struggling readers and writers, and on a national footing, support for teachers working with these pupils.

I was fairly new to research however, having just completed a research based report for the MA:LLLD<sup>2</sup> at IOE. At the outset of the EdD I was somewhat apprehensive at the thought of further study, but the well-supported programme with its emphasis on research in situ and theory-practice links has proved to be immeasurably suitable for deepening and extending my understandings in the professional work context.

## A changing identity

The change of role and series of new starts triggered a re-evaluation of my professional identity: whereas I would previously have regarded myself principally as a 'teacher', indeed as a manager to whom others came for advice, I now perceive myself as a learner 'constantly in the process of learning about teaching while [I am] doing it' (Gaffney & Askew 1999, p.199). The dual nature

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<sup>1</sup> Reading Recovery is an early literacy intervention designed to bring the lowest attaining children in school to age-appropriate levels in less than 20 weeks

<sup>2</sup> Masters degree in Literacy Learning & Literacy difficulties

of the change process instigated by this career move – a change of job, but also a shift from manager/teacher to student, to one sitting ‘outside the circle’ as non-participant observer – for a period left my sense of professional identity in doubt. It took some time to begin to adopt the additional identity of novice ‘researcher.’

## **A time of exploration**

I was plunged into my first assignment with little idea of what I might examine or why. My reading led me to explore such topics as communities of learners, transformative learning and the idea of the activist teaching professional, all new concepts for me. Each discourse inspired my thinking and in some ways laid the foundation for further research: the ‘community of learners’ concept (Rogoff, Matusov & White 1996), because it stresses mutuality as learners and reciprocal learning; transformative learning theory (Mezirow 1991), as it focuses on the possibility of deep human change through education; developing activist teaching professionals (Sachs 2003), as it demonstrates a locally-based and teacher-empowered strategy for turning knowledge into action.

We were reminded that the focus of the EdD was ‘...research in relation to professional practice’ (EdD Handbook 2011-12, p.26). I welcomed the opportunity to explore the theories on which the adult teaching and learning practice I was observing and to which I was in a sense apprenticed, were based. Thus my Foundations of Professionalism (FOP) assignment concluded – ‘As a second-chance literacy programme Reading Recovery is frequently the subject of research ...but... its distinct advantages as a professional development programme – as developing communities of learners across phases, supporting learning that transforms theory, purpose and practice, and producing professionals active in their educational communities and beyond – seem to have been neglected in the professional literature.’ From the outset, these three constructs have been important to me.

Simultaneous with the EdD taught modules and as part of my Specialist route, I observed a group of MA: LLLD<sup>3</sup> candidates during their weekly seminars at IOE; I became intrigued by the ways in which the students, all experienced teachers, seemed to modify their theoretical viewpoints about and pedagogical approaches to literacy learning through the continuing professional development as I had done a couple of years before. My reading of Rogoff *et al.*, (1996) on communities of learners, and Mezirow (1991) on the features, triggers and processes involved in adult learning with the potential to be transformative, helped me to understand something of the essence of the changes being experienced. I gathered qualitative data - field notes from non-participant observation of this group and participants' journalled reflections generated during the year through open-ended structured written questions and communicated by email.<sup>4</sup> However, I had little sense of a research design or specific question to be addressed in this study.

My research resulted in a specialist assignment entitled *'Reflecting on transformative learning theory and its capacity to explain the professional development of Reading Recovery teacher leaders'* in which I tentatively concluded that transformative learning is an implied objective of the MA: LLLD. The CPD was shown to provide an appropriate structure and a stimulating curriculum with a wide variety of opportunities in which transformative learning could occur. Indisputably changes to course participants' cognitions did take place. The available data however provided little information about specific catalysts for these theoretical shifts and the question of whether these involved the disorienting dilemmas of Mezirow's hypothesis remained unanswered in this study. Expressions of a wide range of emotions as a result of the intensity of the teaching and learning experiences on the course were a feature of this group from the start, but the support and cooperation of like-minded colleagues ensured that the process of transformative learning was realised. Like others, I considered the impact of 'affect' to be underestimated in Mezirow's thesis. Even

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<sup>3</sup> Candidates for the MA: LLLD (Professional route) at IOE prepare for their role as Reading Recovery teacher leaders during a year's full-time study

<sup>4</sup> Questions included - 'Reflecting on yourself as a professional and your experiences and learning thus far on the course, can you provide some ideas about 1. How you are thinking? 2. What you are feeling? 3. Describe any other ways in which the course has affected you

with this proviso transformative learning theory was found to be a helpful lens through which to examine the aims, design and implementation of the MA: LLLD.

My specific challenge at this time was to frame my research and findings in recognisable and appropriate formats. An opportunity to learn how to write a research proposal and to explore once more the notion of professional change presented itself. The focus was the early impact of a resource-led innovation on a group of experts responsible for the initial PD of RR teachers. The publication of *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals, Parts 1 & 2* (Clay 2005a&b), a teachers' guidebook making theoretical and practical links for RR teachers, coincided with Methods of Enquiry 1 and 2 (MOE 1 & 2). A review of the literature of educational change confirmed my opinion that it is the manner in which change is introduced and implemented that makes a difference to its reception and impact (Rogers 1983), perhaps as much as the innovation itself. Qualitative data – individual questionnaires and semi-structured interviews – were garnered to explore the research question – *'What is the initial impact of a resource-led innovation on a group of experts responsible for the professional development of others?'* This assignment ran parallel with my introduction to the larger group of professionals with whom I would be working and acted as a useful bridge to communication at a deeper level with a few individuals who willingly gave of their time.

During this assignment I began to learn to use NVivo7 (QSR 2008) to assist data management, but found it frustrating due to insufficient introduction and little time to master. Ultimately I was compelled to revert to manual methods to complete the analysis. (By the thesis phase NVivo8 had been produced; I purchased two days training and found the format more intuitive).

The proposal, planning, formulation of the research question and some early reading in the field were the main objectives of MOE1; carrying out the research and critically reflecting on the processes involved formed the MOE2 assignment. Through these modules I learnt how to –

- locate my epistemological position



- trial the planning and scope of a small-scale research project
- consider ethical responsibilities
- practise generating qualitative data – e.g. through interviews including by telephone and through the construction of a simple questionnaire, each of these challenging
- apply my knowledge of analysis to real data and to make it meaningful and accessible to others.

## Deeper into research

Building on the study described above, and with my supervisor's advice, I decided to follow a group of experienced *RR/CPD*<sup>5</sup> teachers from September 2006 – February 2007 when the new publications (Clay 2005a&b - above) were becoming their primary tools of reference. I wanted to determine the ways in which the process of engaging with the revised teaching guidance began to influence their teacher leader's theoretical stance on literacy acquisition and consequently her<sup>6</sup> tutoring practice. I wished also to further develop my interviewing techniques and analytical skills.

In the Institute Focused Study (IFS) entitled ‘*“Knowing the ...you know”: enriching teachers’ learning through resource-led change,*’ I inquired if and how teachers’ theoretical understanding about early literacy acquisition was challenged and deepened through supported engagement with the ideas and practice proposed in Clay (2005). Qualitative data were gathered over the six month period through observation of the teacher group, an individual semi-structured interview with their teacher leader and a teacher focus group. It became evident that the renewed understandings and modified practice of the teacher leader herself to guide and influence the implementation were of prime importance for the success of this innovation. Underlying the process of change was a deep-seated assumption that continuous learning is possible and

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<sup>5</sup> For as long as teachers are involved in RR, they are required to participate in CPD, which acts as a quality assurance tool designed to maintain fidelity to the intervention while also recognising the essence of professional learning as ongoing

<sup>6</sup> As RR teacher leaders in England are mostly women, I use the feminine personal pronoun throughout

desirable for all who belong to this community of learners. With hindsight, I reflect that there was far more understanding to be educed through the data generated in this study than I was able to discover at the time. I looked forward to the thesis phase in which I hoped deeper analysis would be possible. I recognised the need for some 'cranking up' in both scale and insight.

## **Writing a thesis**

The contributions of supervisory support and twice-termly EdD workshops ensured that by the time I approached the thesis phase (2008-12) the shackles of 'impostor syndrome' and early diffidence had gone (Rippin 2003). I had become increasingly confident in the complex role of National Leader, and more secure in researcher role. It took some time however to settle on a suitable research area for my thesis, but eventually the proposal was written and presented: with a small, diverse group of teacher-participants engaged in extended CPD, I set out to examine changing understandings concerning pupils' early literacy processing. The story of this most recent research is reported in the rest of this document.

## **Reflection to date**

The EdD handbook states that 'The thesis must consist of your own account of your investigations and must indicate in what respects they appear to advance the understanding of your subject, and how the research has contributed to your professional development and role' (p.86). With the support of the EdD programme, my development as a researcher has occurred through focused study of professional change processes instigated by innovation or through the continued professional development of teachers, both with the potential to generate modification or revision to existing theoretical perspectives. Now as programme leader of the MA: Reading Recovery and Literacy Leadership, I am able to put my insights into practice where applicable. I am ready also to defend my thesis.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AST – Advanced Skills Teacher  
CED – Chambers English Dictionary  
CLL – Communication, Language & Learning  
CPD – Continuing Professional Development  
DCSF – Department for Children, Schools & Families  
DFE – Department for Education  
DFEE - Department for Education & Employment  
*ECaR – Every Child a Reader*  
ECRR – European Centre for Reading Recovery  
EdD – Doctor in Education  
FOP – Foundations of Professionalism  
IPD – Initial Professional Development  
IFS – Institute Focused Study  
IOE - Institute of Education, University of London  
IRA – International Reading association  
ISS – Inservice sessions  
ITE – Initial Teacher Education  
KS-1 – Key Stage One (5-7 years old)  
KS-2 – Key Stage Two (7-11 years old)  
KS-3 – Key Stage Three (11-14 years old)  
LA – Local Authority  
LITCo – Literacy Coordinator  
*L&S – Letters and sounds*  
MOE – Methods of Enquiry  
NC - National Curriculum  
NLS - National Literacy Strategy  
NQT – Newly Qualified Teacher  
NS – National Strategy  
OFSTED – Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services & Skills  
PD – Professional Development  
PLC – Professional Learning Community  
PS – Primary Strategy

QTS – Qualified Teacher Status

*RR – Reading Recovery*

RR/IPD – Reading Recovery Initial Professional Development

SATs - Standard assessment tasks

SEN – Special Educational Needs

SENCo – Special Education Needs Coordinator

SMT – Senior Management Team

*SSP – Systematic, synthetic phonics*

SVR – Simple View of Reading

TA – Teaching Assistant

TDA – Training & Development Agency for Schools

TL – Teacher Leader

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## PARTICIPANTS' PSEUDONYMS AND CODING KEY

Pseudonyms	Coding used in reporting data
Di	D
Heather	H
Kate	Kt
Leila	Le
Linda	Li
Peter	P
Kalvinder	Ka
Eva	E
Di's PD leader	G
Peter's PD leader	N
Kalvinder's PD leader	M
Eva's consultant	R
Heather's consultant	S

### **Coding key**

D/1/4 indicates that the quotation comes from Di's first interview, transcript page 4

L/3/16 indicates that the quotation comes from Linda's third and final interview, transcript page 16

H/EJ1/8 indicates that the quotation comes from Heather's first e-journal, transcript page 8

P/LO/10 indicates that the quotation comes from Peter's lesson observation, transcript page 10

# CHAPTER ONE - Introduction to this study

## Introduction

Recent research into school effectiveness has demonstrated that differences in the social economic background of pupils (Feinstein 2003; Hamre & Pianta 2005) and between-school effects can reasonably be dismissed as small when compared with the considerable impact of the quality of the teacher on the learning of pupils (Hanushek & Rivkin 2006; Wiliam 2010). Eight year old pupils with attainment at or around the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile can vary by as many as 53 percentile points at age eleven when taught by high or low performing teachers (McKinsey Report 2007). 'It matters very much which classroom you are in,' states Wiliam (*op.cit.*) whose message is simple - if pupils' achievement is poor, teacher quality must be enhanced. Since it is costly in terms of time, effort and money to produce new teachers, work must also continue with the current cohort, deepening understandings and improving practice to develop teacher expertise and realise higher pupil achievement.

The intrinsic worth of continuing professional development (CPD) and its potential to develop pedagogical understandings and practice is the premise of this thesis. In the report of the qualitative study which follows, I explore the impact of advanced professional learning on experienced Year 1<sup>7</sup> teachers engaged in diverse CPD during an eleven month period in 2008-9. Four types of CPD<sup>8</sup> were considered, each designed to develop new, deeper or transformed understandings about aspects of literacy learning and teaching with which to support the learning of *all* pupils. These were -

1. training in systematic, synthetic phonics (SSP)
2. preparation for Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) status while specialising in systematic, synthetic phonics
3. sustaining and extending systematic, synthetic phonics in school

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<sup>7</sup> Pupils in Year 1 are 5-6 years old

<sup>8</sup> I use the terms PD and CPD interchangeably throughout, as does much of the literature devoted to this field. Strictly speaking once teachers have qualified teacher status, any and all PD undertaken is *continuing* professional development, the term neatly encapsulating the notion of 'never-ending'. Further definition is offered early in Chapter Two

4. participation in initial professional development for *Reading Recovery* teachers (*RR/IPD*) as part of the *Every Child a Reader (ECaR)* intervention.

I present data showing how effective PD can modify or change teachers' standpoints on pedagogy, their theories underlying the teaching of literacy and other perspectives related to teachers' learning and practice. I show how as a result of their engagement in CPD, almost a year long, participants experience a range of strong emotions that may in themselves be catalysts for further change. There is no sense in which either the CPD courses or the two literacy-teaching initiatives (*SSP and RR*) are being compared.

## **Designing a study to achieve my aims**

I set out to examine the impact of PD on teachers' perspectives on early literacy acquisition, specifically around how pupils are taught to process and comprehend continuous text and how they are prepared to problem-solve unknown words. I adopted a case study design as its characteristics of thick description and interpretation reached through extensive analysis, are conducive to developing an understanding of the complexity of change over time occurring for teachers through CPD engagement. Case study is also sensitive to the study's goals of research in naturalistic social settings. In this study these were mainstream primary classrooms (Key Stage 1 – KS-1)<sup>9</sup> and one to one teaching-learning environments located in classrooms, libraries and Special Educational Needs (SEN) areas.

To address the research question – '*What is the impact of extended professional development in early literacy acquisition on the personal and professional perspectives of Year 1 teachers?*' - qualitative methods were adopted<sup>10</sup>. The purpose of this research was to gain detailed insight into the impact of CPD on a small number of teachers. Data collection methods were selected for their ability to support exploration of deeply held understandings:

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<sup>9</sup> KS-1 is the learning phase for 5-7 year old pupils

<sup>10</sup> As I began to analyse the data in depth the research took a different direction. See pp.25 & 66 for a fuller explanation



*observation* – non-participant observation of a lesson taught by each teacher participant followed by stimulated recall and co-constructed reflection with the teacher; *interview* – three interviews with each individual spread throughout the period to capture and examine changing views over time; and *document analysis* – participants' unprompted reflections recorded in e-journals. Adopting a case study design and qualitative methods and using an approach to data analysis inspired by grounded theory, I sought to identify and present the participants' evolving perspectives as they met the challenge of considering theoretical perspectives new to them, while simultaneously seeking to master corresponding pedagogical procedures.

Exploring this theme offered much of interest. Rich data as contextualised illustration, self-reflection, and vignettes appear throughout this report. However, as I moved through the analytical stages, the changes occurring to teachers' personal and professional theories concerning *aspects of their own learning and teaching* became more prominent e.g. their attitude to the construction of knowledge, their emerging self-efficacy beliefs, the range of emotions experienced as part of intensive CPD, and their self-perceptions as developing 'experts' in the field of early literacy. 'Expertise' was articulated as a goal at the study's outset by some participants and implied in the understandings of others. Illustrating their stories with their developing insights and critical self-reflection, I have endeavoured to theorise around the participants' experiences of CPD.

### ***Why does this research matter?***

This research is valuable for several reasons. Firstly, the current drive for excellence in classrooms in England is manifested in an imperative for effective professional learning (DFE 2010). To optimise learning opportunities it behoves teacher educators to understand as much as possible about the nature of adult learners' responses. Secondly, since CPD is now recognised as vital to retain, value and develop teachers (*House of Commons Education Committee: Great teachers: attracting, training and retaining the best*, 2012), we need to ensure that teachers engage with CPD that builds an effective knowledge base and

progresses their understandings in ways that are both transformative and generative - that is, capable of producing new and other knowledge, or applying it flexibly and in different contexts. Teachers are required to be of the highest calibre to address pupils' complex literacy learning needs (Gallant & Schwartz 2010), including now also the challenge of screen and multi-modal texts (Levy 2009). Thirdly, CPD is expensive and participating adults bring with them predispositions and preferences that impinge on the ways they learn and apply new knowledge (Dadds 1997). We need to know which forms of CPD are most cost-effective, to ensure that these continue to be available and affordable to schools.

### ***Why this research now?***

Timing was important to this field of study. Following the *Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading* (Rose 2006), systematic, synthetic phonics was introduced to primary teachers through *Letters and sounds* (DFES) in 2007, denoting a quite different instructional emphasis from the 'searchlights' approach<sup>11</sup> to reading acquisition adopted during the years of the *National Literacy Strategy* (NLS; DFEE, 1998). Simultaneously, under the auspices of *Every Child a Reader* many teachers were learning to work with struggling pupils according to *Reading Recovery* principles.

Data collection during 2008-9 allowed for the identification of teachers who had not yet been influenced by either approach, but who could compare and contrast 'new' pedagogies with those developed under 'the Strategy' as it had become known. A year or two later most teachers would have been influenced by *SSP*, which at the time of writing has been endorsed by central government as 'the most effective way of teaching young children to read' (DFE 2010, p.43). However, the aim of this study is not to compare literacy learning approaches, but rather to explore participants' reactions to theoretical and methodological change.

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<sup>11</sup> The searchlights approach encourages children to use phonics (e.g. initial sounds) alongside context-based cues (does it fit?) and meaning-based cues (does it make sense?) to decode unknown words

In the following section I summarise the context for the renewed emphasis on teaching literacy (reading and writing) in English classrooms (2008-9), and briefly describe the principal methodologies. The *SSP* teaching programme and *ECaR* literacy intervention reflect distinct approaches to early literacy teaching at the current time, and separate and different responses to a problem identified by government, in academia and disseminated through the media (*Appendix K – Letters and sounds: a summary; Appendix L – Reading Recovery principles and practice: a summary*).

## **Contextual background**

By 2008-9 the National Strategies (NS) had been influencing teachers' thinking and practice for a decade although NS policy and practice was never statutory. The '*Primary Framework for Literacy and Mathematics*' (DCSF 2006) placed a fresh emphasis on speaking and listening; its child-centred creative activities and the shift to teach reading through *SSP* were underpinned by an imperative to reach children facing barriers to learning.

### ***The 'tail of literacy underachievement'***

Despite the best efforts of governments and schools to reduce the tail of underachievers in England identified in international comparisons of student literacy achievement (PIRLS 2006; PISA 2009 & earlier)<sup>12</sup>, little had altered for the 6-7 per cent or 30 - 35,000 pupils (DfES 2005) entering secondary schools annually with the literacy attainment of or below seven year olds, attainment making the challenges of the KS-3 curriculum<sup>13</sup> insurmountable. Other data corroborate these trends (Cassen & Kingdon 2007; Gross & McChrystal 2001; ECOTEC 2001). The social and economic costs of illiteracy to England, though exceedingly complex to calculate, have been estimated to cost between £198 and £2.5 billion annually (KPMG 2009).

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<sup>12</sup> In the most recent Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS 2006) England lay in 19<sup>th</sup> position; in the Progress for International Student Assessment (PISA 2009) the UK lay in 26<sup>th</sup> position

<sup>13</sup> KS-3 (Key Stage Three) is the learning phase for 11-14 year old pupils

During the winter of 2004-5, concern about literacy levels and the relative worth of literacy acquisition pedagogies attracted media attention, the tenor of the publicity regarded as another episode of 'the reading wars' (Lemann 1997). A *House of Commons Education and Skills Committee: Teaching children to read* (2004-5) was convened to consider the views of literacy experts and to discuss ways forward. Two outcomes pertained, both germane to this thesis – *The Rose Review* and *Every Child a Reader*.

### **Government response – *The Rose Review* (2006)**

Subsequently the government-commissioned Rose Review (2006) recommended a greater emphasis on 'high-quality phonic work within a broad and rich language curriculum' as the prime means of teaching all children how to read and write (DfES 2007, p.3). Much former advice on the teaching of early reading (e.g. NLS 1998; *Reading for purpose and pleasure*, Ofsted 2004) was revised to assist those in school leadership to implement the review's main recommendation. *The Simple View of Reading* (Gough & Tunmer 1986; Appendix J) was adopted to support the understanding of the teaching of literacy and guide classroom teaching: word recognition and language comprehension were to be taught as discrete elements.

Rose's endorsement of the systematic, synthetic phonics (SSP) approach to teaching reading was largely based on evidence from Clackmannanshire's longitudinal study (Johnston & Watson 2005)<sup>14</sup>. The research claims to demonstrate the effectiveness of synthetic phonics on both reading and spelling progress. However its credibility is reduced through faults to the design and evaluation acknowledged in the Rose Review itself.

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<sup>14</sup> 'The Education and Skills Committee placed considerable weight on the findings of a seven-year longitudinal study in Clackmannanshire in Scotland, noting that 'the Clackmannanshire study is an important addition to the research picture, which increasingly points to synthetic phonics as a vital part of early reading education'. Several contributors to the review also underlined the importance of this study. Other contributors, however, challenged some aspects of the study, because they did not feel it had been undertaken rigorously enough' (Rose 2006, p.61, section 24).

### ***Letters and sounds***

A teaching and learning resource, *Letters and sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics* (L&S; DfES 2007) was subsequently produced and distributed freely to support teachers (*Appendix K*). It had been piloted and evaluated in several English LAs, but was untested in others. It is not unreasonable to suggest that in rolling out this large-scale literacy initiative and providing the means to implement it, the government's motive was not only to produce confident young readers, but also to further develop teachers' expertise.

Daily lessons based on *L & S* enable most pupils to quickly recognise individual phonemes, blend phonemes into words for reading (c-a-t → cat) and segment words for writing (cat → c-a-t). Often utilising a multi-sensory approach, each lesson is based on a 4-part sequence – revisit/review, teach, practise and apply. Simple decodable texts using only known phonemes/words are often employed so that pupils are immediately successful reading in context (*Appendix K*).

In this study three participants follow CPD in systematic, synthetic phonics using *L&S*, at basic and advanced levels and as the specialism underlying one participant's ambition to become an AST<sup>15</sup>.

### ***Every Child a Reader – tailored intervention for those 'at risk' of illiteracy***

While *SSP* was an approach to addressing the quality of literacy teaching for all, the government's response to address the 'tail' (Rose 2006) was *Every Child a Reader* (*ECaR*), with the early literacy intervention *Reading Recovery* at its heart. Originally conceived as a partnership between charitable trusts involving business, the University of London's Institute of Education and government sponsorship, *ECaR* had already demonstrated its effectiveness (Burroughs-Lange & Douëttil 2007). Aligned with the NS (until its demise in March 2011) and an essential component of government policy from September 2008<sup>16</sup>, *ECaR*

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<sup>15</sup> Advanced Skills Teacher; see Footnote 44, p.78

<sup>16</sup> The government sponsored roll-out took place from Sep 2008 to August 2011

was designed to ensure that ‘every child who needs early literacy support receives it and that the numbers of pupils experiencing long-term literacy difficulties are dramatically reduced’ (ECaR 2006). It was intended that by 2011, 30,000 pupils would benefit, a vision necessitating rapid expansion of the highly-skilled teachers trained on the year-long *RR/IPD* course.

*Reading Recovery* was developed by Clay in New Zealand in 1978 to provide children with a second chance of literacy learning. Clay’s theory of early literacy acquisition is based on careful observation of normally progressing readers’ construction of individual literacy processing systems using continuous text (Clay 2005; *Appendix L – Reading Recovery principles and practice: a summary*). It is said to be complementary to any literacy curriculum (Clay 1991) and has achieved considerable success with pupils since its inception in the UK in the early 1990s (Burroughs-Lange 2009).

In *RR* lessons (30 minutes daily) several familiar texts are read to provide opportunities for the orchestration of taught strategies and the teaching of fluency and phrasing. A running record is taken on a text introduced the day before. Letter and word work related to current learning in reading and writing are practised out of context and immediately applied. Following a conversation a short story is written and high frequency words are learnt for spelling. A new book is introduced (*Appendix L*).

However, *ECaR* was not simply *Reading Recovery* replicated. It included waves or layers of intervention (DFES 2003)<sup>17</sup> intended to reach the many pupils whose literacy learning needs required ‘lighter touch’ intervention. These were implemented mainly by teaching assistants (TAs) who were trained and mentored by the school’s *RR* teacher. As part of the *ECaR* strategy the *RR* teacher’s role evolved from that of an accomplished teacher involved mainly with individual pupils, to a literacy expert who -

- worked directly with the lowest attaining pupils daily
- assessed pupils to target interventions precisely

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<sup>17</sup> E.g. Better Reading Partnership (1997), Talking Partners (1998), Fischer Family Trust 3 (2004), Early Literacy Support (DCFS 2007)

- provided training/coaching/support for TAs
- monitored and evaluated the impact of interventions
- developed strong relationships with pupils' families/carers (ECRR 2006).

Like systematic, synthetic phonics, *ECaR* has had its share of detractors. An *Evaluation of Every Child a Reader* (DFE 2011) generally endorses its efficacy, acknowledging 'an overall positive impact on school level reading and writing attainment' (p.11). Its professional development programme for teachers is 'highly regarded' by 97% *RR* teachers (p.89). Pedagogical criticisms directed towards *Reading Recovery* itself usually charge it with neglecting systematic phonics instruction (e.g. Chapman *et al.*, 2001). However the latest iteration of its teaching guide<sup>18</sup> includes principles drawn from recent research into phonemic awareness, and promotes appropriate word and letter work for every lesson. In this study five participants follow initial professional development courses in the principles and practice of *Reading Recovery*.

The distinct instructional approaches integral to *SSP* (specifically *Letters and sounds*) and *RR* are clarified in *Appendices J, K and L*. Descriptions of the blended learning opportunities for teachers following each CPD programme are located in Chapter Three.

## **CPD is central to teachers' understanding and pupils' progress**

Lifting the attainment of pupils including the lowest-attaining cohort calls for teachers to embrace high expectations and adopt changed attitudes (Ofsted 2011). During and shortly after initial teacher education (ITE), newly qualified teachers (NQTs) cannot be expected to be able to identify pupils' specific learning needs or plan steps required to achieve remediation, since they are unlikely to have formed perspectives on the normal, but complex development of young readers. Thus, *continuing* professional development is crucial.

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<sup>18</sup> Clay, M.M. (2005a&b)

Hill & Crévola (1999, cited in Fullan *et al.*, 2006) suggest that to prompt the refinements of practice known to be associated with pupils' increased attainment, teachers need to be 'able to articulate both what they do and why they do it' (p.12). The verbalisation of practice and rationales for teacher decision-making creates a cyclical effect on which to build effective practice and deepen understandings. Accordingly, it is essential that the CPD offered to teachers is intellectually stimulating and likely to 'make a difference'. Chapter Two takes up this argument exemplified from a relevant literature. As Wiliam (2010) suggests, successful reform cannot wait for a generation of newly trained and appointed teachers. It requires investment in the present teacher workforce, simultaneous with improving the quality of entrants to the profession (DFE 2010).

Concurrent with the obligation to raise literacy levels to take full advantage of 21<sup>st</sup> century technology, economic constraints have led to a substantial reduction in the budgets of CPD providers (Maddern 2011). Since CPD budgets are now located almost entirely within schools and allocated at the discretion of head teachers, it follows that teachers' professional development may be addressed more directly and efficiently than previously. However, there is also a danger that CPD will lack strategic planning or suffer neglect, due to an immediacy of perceived priorities or practical demands on school budgets.

## **Thesis structure**

In this chapter, I have begun to introduce my theme: an exploration of personal and professional change to teacher-participants' theories regarding literacy acquisition, to their pedagogy, to attitudes and perspectives relating to the construction of knowledge and to their self-efficacy beliefs as a result of CPD in literacy teaching and learning. To contextualise the study I have emphasised the current drive to raise literacy standards, reflected in government responses in particular through *SSP* programmes and the *ECaR* intervention with their respective courses of professional development, describing and critiquing these briefly.



Chapter Two is principally a literature review through which I consider a variety of conceptions of CPD and examine PD components shown to be the most consistently powerful for adults' professional learning; I argue that teachers require and are entitled to those forms of CPD known to be most effective. I demonstrate a link between effective CPD, outstanding teachers and raised pupil outcomes. During data analysis 'expertise' emerged as a core theme; consequently I examine expertise at length through scrutiny of a relevant literature, summarising how it might be characterised in teaching professionals. The role of 'affect' is a similarly powerful emerging theme. Since the study's participants are challenged by much that is new or contrary to their current assumptions, and as they experience a range of emotions seemingly associated with their respective CPD, I briefly introduce a literature focusing on the role of affect in teachers' lives.

The theoretical perspectives underlying this study and the epistemological position adopted are explained in Chapter Three, as is a description and consideration of the research design, qualitative methods and ethical code governing the study. The processes of data collection, analysis and interpretation are reported in this chapter also, illustrating where applicable.

In Chapter Four I tell the story of the research and discuss insights educed from data generated throughout the period. I seek to integrate the core themes of 'expertise' and 'affect', using *in vivo* data with analytical commentary to enliven and add authenticity to the account. Following an introduction the chapter is divided into three thematic sections –

- Participants' changed and changing understandings in relation to literacy acquisition and pedagogy
- 'Expert' models of PD leadership: participants discuss
- Looking back: looking forward...

I discuss the study's findings in Chapter Five in the light of recent pertinent literature and the current political interest in CPD to raise pupil achievement and address the problems of attrition in the teaching profession - an interest greatly

increased since the data were collected. I summarise implications arising from the findings, perhaps useful to those involved in PD design or leadership.

In Chapter Six I present a synopsis of the study's goals, research processes and findings. Threats to the study's trustworthiness, a consideration of its limitations and perspectives on both the research process and reflections on my professional growth as a result of engagement with the research are included in this final chapter. Lastly, I consider avenues for future research arising from the present study.

## **CHAPTER TWO – ‘If I believe this, I will do something differently than if I believe that...’**

### **Introduction**

Much has been written of the challenges arising from the new technologies, with the resulting impact on educational systems and implications for educational practice (Fullan 2001; Duncan 2010). Teaching in 21<sup>st</sup> century England requires both a broader and deeper knowledge and skill base compared with a time when traditional ‘transmission’ roles sufficed (Fullan 1995). For the coalition government (from 2010) improving teachers’ capacity is a priority -

The evidence from around the world shows us that the most important factor in determining the effectiveness of a school system is the quality of its teachers... (DFE 2010, p.19).

In this chapter I consider the concept of teaching as a ‘learning’ profession. I explore and critique conceptions of CPD, focusing on aspects that seem to work well for teachers’ advanced professional learning and pertinent to this research. Having examined the concept of ‘expertise’ which emerged as central to this study and which may be assumed to be a principal goal of CPD, I review the association between expert teaching and raised pupil attainment. Since the role of ‘affect’ in teachers’ professional learning (as emotional reaction or experience) is also important to this study, I introduce and critique aspects of the human dimensions of change theory.

Referring to recent literature in the field, I will argue that –

- teachers’ continuing professional learning, as much as their pedagogy, should be highly valued in schools (Sachs 2003)
- teachers have both a need for and an entitlement to CPD that is known to be effective
- for CPD to be effective and for its impact to be sustained, it must influence and alter teachers’ theoretical understandings (where applicable) as much as develop their practice (Coburn 2003)

- there is an intrinsic connection between effective CPD, transformed theoretical perspectives and enhanced practice, and improved pupil attainment
- expertise is more a description of practice than a stage to be attained (Fook *et al.*, 2000)
- as a result of intensive CPD, teachers may experience a range of emotions, especially when encountering new or different understandings or when asked to hone and apply new pedagogical procedures
- since teachers bring to CPD already formed theories and considerable classroom practice that have seemed to 'work' in the past, leaders should be alert to participants' personal and professional vulnerability during lengthy courses designed to transform understandings and modify practice.

## Teaching: a 'learning profession'?

In 1995 Fullan asserted that the notion of 'the school as a learning organisation' was a 'distant dream', regretting that 'teaching [is] not yet a learning profession' (p.230). Almost a decade later Sparks (2004) lamented the unrealised promise of much CPD, a point well illustrated by the top-down approach and ensuing meaninglessness for this teacher audience -

For far too many teachers... staff development is a demeaning, mind-numbing experience as they passively 'sit and get'...Staff development is often mandatory in nature ... and evaluated by 'happiness scales'. As one observer put it, 'I hope I die during an in-service session because the transition between life and death would be so subtle' (p.247).

Notwithstanding Fullan's analysis there has been a *gradual* change in the status of CPD. In 2008-9 the Teaching and Developing Agency (TDA)<sup>19</sup> was reconstituted with a remit to engage school staff in effective CPD, an indicator of its perceived strategic importance. In many schools the focus had shifted from 'in-service' sessions for individual teachers, often technical training sessions conducted offsite with externally-based experts, to a deliberate emphasis on fostering learning *within* the organisation in which teachers were

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<sup>19</sup> From April 2012 known as the Teaching Agency

working (TDA 2007). More recently under the auspices of The Education Bill (DFE 2011), plans to enhance the status of teaching have assured teachers they ‘... [will] receive effective professional development throughout their career, with opportunities to observe and work with other teachers, and appropriate training for leadership positions’ (p.9). A fast developing national network of teaching schools is taking a lead in both ITE and CPD.

Even so, evidence is still scarce that the greater weighting currently accorded CPD, or the shifts in its substance and forms necessarily signify that in the intervening years teaching has become a *learning* profession associated with teachers’ deepened understandings. Rather, recent research seems to demonstrate a lack of awareness or disregard in schools for forms of CPD known to be effective. The TDA-commissioned survey, *Schools and continuing professional development (CPD) in England: State of the nation research project* (Pedder *et al.*, 2008)<sup>20</sup> reports that ‘most teachers’ approaches to CPD tend not to be collaborative, nor clearly contextualised in classroom practice, nor research informed’ (p.7), despite recognition of those methods as most helpful for teachers’ professional learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin 1995).

The benefits for teachers’ development and pupils’ attainment appear to be greatest where Senior Management Teams (SMTs) understand the potential of CPD for raising standards and have designed or selected it with their schools’ requirements in mind (Earley & Porritt 2009). CPD then functions as a ‘logical chain’ of procedures linking identification of school and staff needs, planning, monitoring progress and assessing impact (Ofsted<sup>21</sup> 2006). Disturbingly, Pedder *et al.*, (*op.cit.*) report that –

School level impacts [of CPD] or impacts on beliefs and practices of others such as teachers or pupils are rarely identified by teachers...there is little indication that current CPD is perceived as having an impact on raising standards or narrowing the achievement gap (p.8).

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<sup>20</sup> 329 primary & 59 secondary schools were approached to complete surveys regarding the benefits, status & effectiveness of CPD, its planning and organisation in school & access arrangements. A 39% response rate was achieved (1126 teacher surveys plus leadership team surveys)

<sup>21</sup> Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills

These findings tend to imply that Fullan's 'distant dream' of schools as learning organisations may still be unrealised. Since the impact of CPD on teachers' theoretical understandings of literacy acquisition is central to this research, its current status, scope and evaluation form the focus of this literature search and critique of what is known. An initial understanding for this study must come from an evaluation of how the term 'professional development' is variously characterised.

## **Professional development – a shared understanding**

### ***CPD: Teachers' needs and entitlement***

The imperative for teachers to be involved in CPD throughout their careers is well recognised. According to Day (1999, cited in Sachs 2003) teachers can only fulfil their educational purposes '...if they are both well-prepared for the profession and able to maintain and improve their contribution to it through life-long learning' (p.31). 'Unless you [as a teacher] protect yourself against the insidious consequences of intellectual-professional loneliness, you reduce the satisfaction you will derive from your career,' advises Sarason (1993, p.62). Shulman's (1987) view is unequivocal - teaching is a learned profession and teachers are members of a scholarly community. Teachers devoting themselves unremittingly to their work require appropriate and substantial input to sustain professional growth and development. Alluding to the commitment to continuous professional learning as a hallmark of the professional, Sachs (*op.cit.*) proposes that learning leading to change should be at the core of a platform for rethinking teacher professionalism. These perspectives derive from a robust belief in teaching as a profession; they endorse a view of CPD as 'entitlement' to fulfil society's expectations of a public service. Examining CPD through these lenses, teachers' needs and rights to CPD are forefronted, ensuring continued enhanced competence for and sustained fulfilment in teaching as a lifetime's career.

### ***CPD: Professional development or professional learning?***

The definition of CPD provided by the TDA associates professional development with the ultimate goal of enhanced classroom practice -

Continuing professional development consists of reflective activity designed to improve an individual's attributes, knowledge, understanding and skills. It supports individual needs and improves professional practice... (2008).

However, for Pickering *et al.*, (2007) the distinction between 'development' and 'learning' is unclear, and in official policy documents, ambiguous. According to Pickering and his colleagues, the former term represents a 'highly "practical" view of teaching and a largely passive process...' (p.7), compared with the deep learning often referred to by teachers. His preferred expression is 'professional learning,' conveying a 'more personal, holistic process of PD' (p.197), and having less to do with a means of improving pupil performance as in the TDA's definition, and more to do with teachers' professional growth. Clearly both are desirable outcomes and one without the other, incongruous, though much recent CPD (e.g. Primary Strategy) has been aimed solely at improving pupil performance. A conceptualisation of teachers' ongoing professional *learning* situated at the heart of an organisation's overall *development* could be powerful however.

### ***CPD: Developing dispositions and changing habits***

The succinct definition by Loucks-Horsley (1996) adds another dimension - '[Professional development is about]...opportunities offered to educators to develop knowledge, skills, approaches and dispositions to improve their effectiveness in their classrooms and organisations' (p.1). Most intriguing is the use of '*disposition*' here, suggesting perhaps that professional development is not associated solely with new or different practices, or even with altered theoretical perspectives, but that it may also have much to do with a teacher's openness and/or potential to respond. Loucks-Horsley expands, citing 'disposition' as critical to understanding that professional development involves *enaction* –

We're not just talking about what people know or can do, but also how they think about things, what they're disposed to do, what they think of

when they get up in the morning. That's like attitudes. But I really like dispositions because it implies some action as well. If I believe this, I will do something differently than if I believe that... (*ibid.*).

Beyond teachers' need for and entitlement to CPD and as a seemingly logical consequence of increased knowledge, skills and understandings, raised attainment for pupils is assumed to be the purpose of teachers' professional development activity. Barth (1990) emphasises the mutual conjunction of ideas

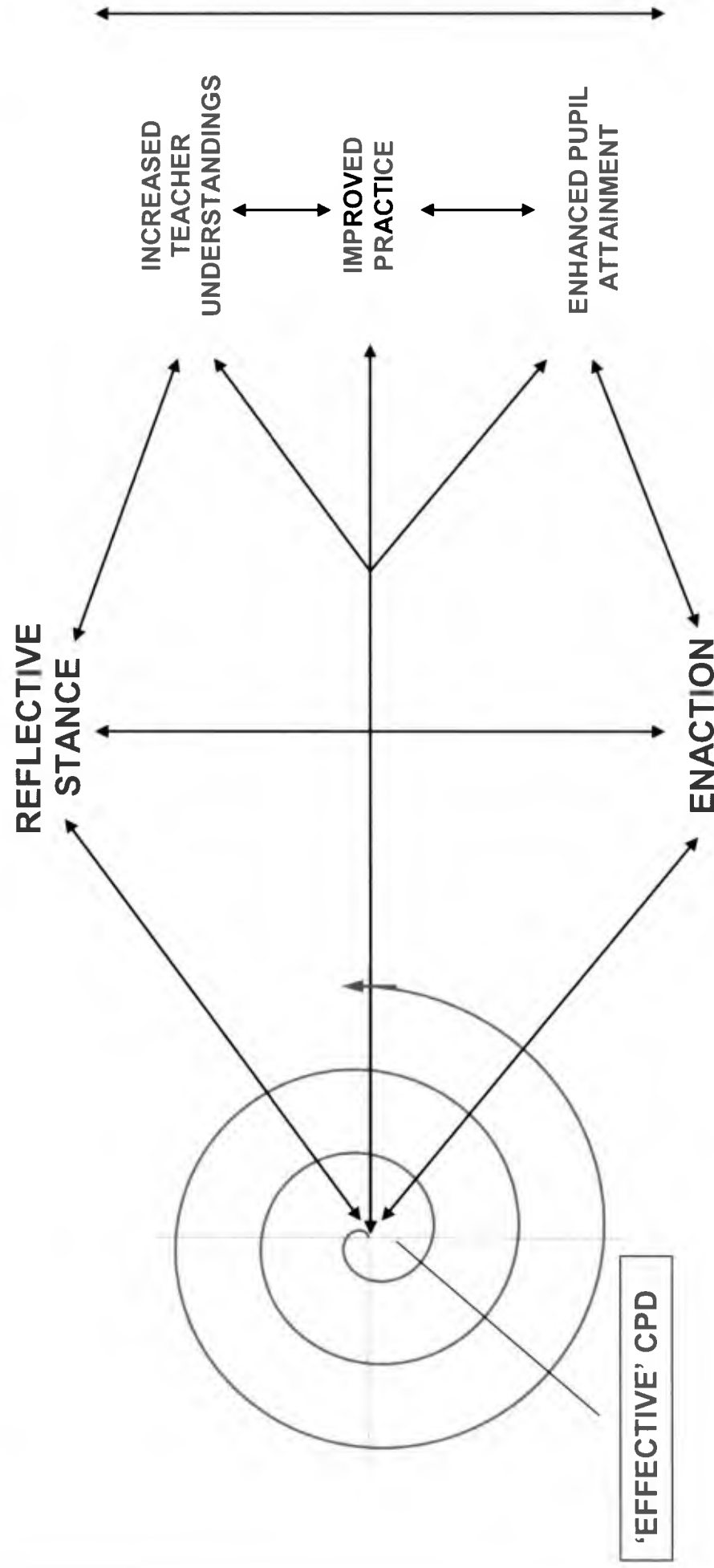
Teacher growth is closely related to pupil growth. Probably nothing within a school has more impact on students ...than the personal and professional growth of their teachers...when teachers observe, examine, question and reflect on their own ideas and develop new practices that lead towards their ideals, [their] students are alive. When teachers stop growing, so do their students... (p.49-50).

### ***An ideal model?***

Each of the above characterisations of CPD underlines a fundamental relationship between CPD activity, teacher growth or change, and the expectation of standard-raising in the classroom, sometimes more specifically with the narrowing of the achievement gap (Loucks-Horsely *et al.*, 2003). *Figure 2.1* demonstrates the *ideal* connection between these components: effective CPD, leading to increased teacher understandings, improved practice and enhanced results in repeated cycles, both prompts and is prompted by the enaction of CPD input or a reflective stance on any aspect of the cycle (Clarke & Hollingsworth 2002). Action and critical reflection recur within and outside the CPD context e.g. in the classroom, in teachers' planning times. However, for the system to function as suggested, it is contingent on the *efficacy* of CPD to address the identified needs of teachers and schools, and efficient SMT management to sustain and extend any positive impact. Sadly, the evidence of the Pedder *et al.*, (2008) survey demonstrates that not all CPD is as effective as it might be. It is rarely evaluated (Ofsted 2006), nor is it always associated with shifts in attitudes, beliefs or theoretical stance known to have the potential to generate more than mere change in pedagogical practice (Hattie 2009).



Figure 2.1: Integral links between 'effective' CPD, teachers' increased understandings and improved practice, and pupils' enhanced attainment on an iterative basis, prompting and prompted by cycles of enaction and a reflective stance on any aspect of the cycle...



In the following section I seek to establish and confirm the link between what is known about CPD effectiveness, teachers' deepened understandings and practice application. For example, is there research evidence that concomitant teacher change accrues as a result of effective CPD? Is there support to confirm that when teachers, having engaged in cycles of CPD activity, are deemed to be improved, excellent or even expert (however these descriptors are interpreted), they produce correspondingly better results in their pupils? I critique and summarise selected theoretical models of teachers' professional learning, with a brief account of practical aspects which facilitate effectiveness and increase teachers' willingness to apply new methodologies in the classroom, thus extending the likelihood of embedding and sustaining improved pedagogy. I accord greatest attention to components most pertinent to the CPD experienced by this study's participants.

### **Which approaches to professional learning are most effective?**

The task of facilitating adult learning is complex and multifaceted, the literacy learning field is contentious and teaching young children to read can be difficult. Adapting pedagogy to scaffold the learning of a diverse set of young learners requires teachers to use a variety of skills flexibly (Clay 2001). Teachers commencing a period of study into early literacy acquisition require models of CPD which provide '...deep and sustained opportunities to learn what the reform [new practice or innovation] is about and what is expected of them...' (Earl *et al.*, 2003, p.14).<sup>22</sup>

Lieberman (1995) argues for adult learning models where learning occurs through active involvement and 'through thinking about and becoming articulate about what they have learned' (p.592). CPD 'which attends to the development of teachers' understanding of learning, to their sense of voice, their judgement and their confidence to cultivate inner expertise as a basis for teaching and for judging outsider initiatives' is posited by Dadds (1997, p.31). Both theorists assert that teachers' practice is empowered by developing understandings. I

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<sup>22</sup> See Chapter Three for information regarding curricular content and patterns of CPD in SSP & RR

focus on this aspect of professional learning because both *SSP* and *RR/IPD* are predicated on participants altering or modifying perspectives about aspects of teaching and learning literacy, and practising differently as a consequence. The following CPD components or approaches have been shown to be conducive to changing understandings in adult learning contexts.

### ***Transformation of meaning perspectives to change practice***

Since the early 1990s the potential of CPD to effect change in attitudes and practice has been a persistent theme running through the discourse on adults' professional learning. Mezirow (1991) hypothesises that learners add and integrate new learning continually within their existing 'meaning schemes' - learned preferences or adopted codes of behaviour developed over time and interpreted through reflective processes. If experience is managed uncritically, these self-imposed boundaries may impede the ability to acquire new knowledge or skills. According to Mezirow, the transformation of intransigent perspectives is enabled by raising self-awareness 'of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world' (1991, p.167). 'Perspective transformation' for Mezirow is essentially a social process, involving 'a sequence of learning activities that begins with a disorienting dilemma and concludes with a changed self-concept that enables a reintegration into one's life context on the basis of conditions dictated by a new perspective' (p.193), but the sequence does not follow a defined pattern of steps.

For perspective transformation to occur, the learning environment, course leadership, curriculum and objectives must be mutually conducive with time for rational discourse and opportunities for critical reflection. Inquiry models, through which teachers can 'raise issues, take risks, and address dilemmas in their own practice,' (Ball & Cohen 1999, cited in Darling-Hammond & Richardson (2009, p.47) are appropriate and can lead to new understandings (Shulman 1997). Spiral curricular designs are also suggested, since –

We cannot critically reflect on an assumption until we are aware of it. We cannot engage in discourse on something we have not identified. We

cannot change a habit of mind without thinking about it in some way (Cranton 2002, p.65).

Teachers' fundamental beliefs may necessitate just such transformation when PD goals are aspirational e.g. to considerably reduce the tail of underachievement in literacy.

However, Mezirow's hypothesis prompts a number of concerns some of which he has sought to resolve in later iterations (Mezirow *et al.*, 2009). The presupposition that transformative learning is required in every adult educational context is not supportable, a point addressed by Cranton (2002). Moreover, transformative change must surely resemble a continuous or 'incremental' process (*ibid.*), like a mindset continually open to new perspectives, rather than a single event, otherwise the theoretical assumptions and misconceptions would be in danger of reappearance. While Mezirow recognises disequilibrium resulting from crisis or dissonance, and specifically notes those occasions as contributing to transformative change, his theory is rationally based and does not appear to take sufficient account of the affective domain, a criticism he acknowledges as requiring further research.

The influence of age, life experience and career path on the potential for transformative change are considered: a rich life experience offers 'a deeper well from which to draw on and react to as individuals engage in dialogue and reflection' (Cragg *et al.*, 2001, cited in Mezirow *et al.*, 2009, p.6). A key element of transformative learning experience is critical reflection - 'It is this interdependent relationship between experience and critical reflection that potentially leads to a new perspective' (*ibid.*).

### ***Critical reflection can bring about enhanced practice***

Reflective practice has been understood in different ways. It may be a private, individual discipline deliberately incorporated to ensure effective teaching (*Figure 2.1*), its evaluation considered thoughtfully afterwards with amendments made for future action, in iterative cycles - that is praxis (Brookfield 1986). The

importance of starting with *self*-reflection is expanded by Zeichner (1994, citing Winter) -

The concept of the teacher as a reflective practitioner recognises the wealth of expertise that resides in the practices of good teachers...it means that the process of understanding and improving one's own teaching must start from reflection upon one's own experience and that the sort of wisdom derived entirely from the experience of others (even other teachers) is impoverished (p.10).

Alternatively critical reflection may occur as a jointly constructed activity among e.g. NQTs, or those observing a colleague's lesson for mentoring purposes. Referring to teacher education, Cranton (2002) explains - 'In teaching for transformation ... [teacher-educators] set the stage and provide the environment in which students can articulate and critically reflect on their assumptions and perspectives' (p.63), encouraging a habit to be developed through a professional career. It is suggested that through reflective practice, pre-service teachers are 'helped to internalise...the disposition and skill to study their teaching...to become better... [and] to take responsibility for their own professional development' (Zeichner 1994, p.11), but this must surely pertain to more experienced teachers too.

Critical reflection is also practised in communities of practice (*below*) where the bigger questions around what it means to teach, and the social problems impacting on teaching, or specific reform goals and their progress are considered. Those who advocate reflection as social practice argue that teachers' beliefs are often only identified and clarified when teachers speak of them to others (Ross 1992), such is the stubbornness of the belief system new teachers often bring with them into teaching (Pajares 1993; *Appendix N – The nature of teachers' knowledge*).

A number of domains by which to characterise reflective thinking are proposed by Zeichner (1994) e.g. depth of reflection (lengthy re-formulation of teaching and learning theory), immediacy of action (rapid reflection on a technical matter) and the period of time for reflection. Each is considered important and influences perspectives and practice in diverse ways.

### ***Empowerment through professional learning communities***

Professional learning communities (PLCs) emerge as profoundly different philosophically from traditional teacher or pupil-led discovery paradigms, and are perceived as groups informally bound together by shared expertise and a mutual passion for joint enterprises of different kinds (Wenger & Snyder 2001) -

By using the term professional learning community we signify our interest not only in discrete acts of teacher sharing, but in the establishment of a school-wide culture that makes collaboration expected, inclusive, genuine, ongoing, and focused on critically examining practice to improve student outcomes... (Seashore *et al.*, 2003, cited in Stoll *et al.*, 2006, p.224).

Groups are typically established around a specific issue and focus on improving practice to achieve positive change. Developing a common language to communicate shared understandings is an integral element (Candace & Bos 1995, cited in Gersten *et al.*, 2000). Each participant actively shares responsibility for the learning, supported by skilled partners who may guide, but whose participation as equals is believed to be an essential element of the learning process.

Far more than subject content is apprehended by PLC participation. Although few differences in the academic achievements of students are claimed, it is suggested there may be qualitative distinctions deriving from the participatory process. As teachers become actively involved in the pursuit of common goals a culture of inquiry is created; they increase in self-motivation, self-efficacy, receptivity to change, developing transferable skills e.g. leadership qualities and collaborative problem-solving. Without this re-culturing and participants' ensuing sense of ownership, attempts to produce educational change tend to fail, Fullan (2001) suggests.

Despite their clear advantages two aspects militate against the establishment of PLCs: firstly, the distinct ethos of mutual trust and equal participation on which collaboration is fostered represents a radical shift from traditional conceptions of CPD and can be difficult to introduce. Secondly, the type of growth envisaged must be understood and valued *before* sufficient time is allocated to it e.g. by

head teachers (Stoll *et al.*, *op.cit*). The goal is not simply the end product e.g. the decision, policy or curricular change. Rather, collaboration is both medium and product, inspiring ownership and commitment.

### ***Feedback/forward processes facilitate professional learning***

Formal and informal feedback/feed-forward processes are at work constantly raising awareness of the impact of our behaviour and helping us to develop as people, if we are willing to respond. In educational contexts skilfully facilitated constructive feedback can modify teacher-learner and teacher-educators' thinking or behaviour to improve pedagogical interactions. A shared understanding of purposeful professional feedback grounded in a relationship of respect, where the underlying rationale is supportive, is necessary to underpin teacher-educators' technical skills e.g. active listening or coaching, and helpful to the process –

When your colleagues know that you always assume the best of them, they are more likely to consider your insights and engage in the process of reflective practice (Schön 1983, cited in Fountas & Pinnell 2009, p.43).

Feedback in the form of a co-constructed discourse using evidence captured during e.g. a lesson, has the potential to lead to self-regulation. Some assessment is usually involved and a standard assumed. Feedback may take many forms - collegial comment, formal written assessment, summative or formative. The teacher-educator's task is to create conditions in which engagement in the feedback process is perceived as positive. Argyris cautions that 'Defensive reasoning can block learning even when the individual commitment ...is high,' (1991, p.100). He hypothesises models of 'single' and 'double loop' learning: in the former, a problem-solving process reaching resolution occurs, but little more is learnt. However, double-loop learning reflecting on how the learner's actions may have contributed to the problem and to seeking its solution, frees the learner to improved or renewed action.

Self-feedback is also encouraged, and is closely linked with praxis, a construct central to effective facilitation in adult learning contexts and stressed by Brookfield (1986). By cyclical involvement 'in a continual process of activity,

reflection upon activity, collaborative analysis of activity, new activity, further reflection and collaborative analysis, and so on...' (*ibid.* p.10), the learner is assisted to interpret experience.

In addition to the theoretical elements or PD models outlined above, a number of practical features are known to strengthen the value of professional learning: mixed-method approaches, mentoring and coaching in situ, the length of time spent on PD and impact evaluation.

### **Which practical aspects facilitate effectiveness of CPD?**

Mixed-methods approaches to deepen and sustain new learning are increasingly offered, frequently as preparation for large-scale reform. In a study by Garet *et al.*, (2001) teachers reported that coherent PD, focused on content knowledge and involving active, collaborative learning produced a sense of efficacy in teachers. In a comparative study of PD types directed to literacy teaching and spanning a year, Carlisle *et al.*, (2011) found that the most comprehensive model incorporating seminars, support for evaluation of teaching and a coach to encourage the integration of pedagogy, improved teachers' instructional capacity. Teachers receiving only two components (seminars and evaluation support) made fewer classroom applications, suggesting the importance of a coach to support practice change.

#### ***Mentoring and coaching in situ assist application of new learning***

Adults have been shown to learn most effectively when teaching-learning is situated 'in the setting where you work' (Elmore 2004, p.73). In a study of workers supporting language and literacy development in young children, Neuman & Cunningham (2008) found that course work, *plus* coaching in situ produced greater improvements than merely course work. Coaching<sup>23</sup> is often part of a blend of CPD opportunities combined with critical reflection and feedback processes.

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<sup>23</sup> 'Coaching is about performing at your best through the individual and private assistance of someone who will challenge, stimulate and guide you to keep growing' Gerard O'Donovan.  
<http://www.therappages.com/Editorials/2004/life-coaching.htm>



Mentoring<sup>24</sup> - ongoing assistance tailored to teachers applying new approaches - is effective especially during the early years of reform, supports sustainability (Berman & McLaughlin 1978, cited in Gersten *et al.*, 2000) and enhances the value of PD (Spodek 1996). Where CPD is adapted to teachers' needs, higher levels of adult-pupil interaction and more positive outcomes are observed (Epstein 1993).

### ***PD duration affects professional learning***

PD as 'one hit' does not allow enough time 'for teachers to develop practice mastery and to "think through" the change effort' (Berman & McLaughlin 1978, cited in Gersten *et al.*, 2000, p.449). The impact is greater when extended over a longer period (Bransford *et al.*, 1999; Elmore 2002) and if the introduction of new materials or practice is gradual (Richardson *et al.*, 2001). Case study work in Aotearoa/New Zealand points to three stages of change in order to make a significant impact on pupil outcomes and clearly requires a longer total period of time (Edwards 2009): initially, to raise staff awareness of the need for change, then to experiment with the new knowledge or practices and develop reflective skills, and lastly to sustain any changes made to practice. However, intensity of PD participation is also associated with pupils' raised attainment, a feature demonstrated in a review of 9 studies (Yoon *et al.*, 2007, cited in Darling-Hammond & Richardson 2009).

### ***Impact evaluation is commonly neglected***

Recent literature appraising current CPD activity in schools highlights a common failure to identify intended outcomes at the outset and lack of systematic impact evaluation during or at the end of CPD (Muijs & Lindsay 2007), despite recognition of its importance. Guskey (2000) notes that evaluation relates to five hierarchical but interdependent levels and argues that impact at each level should be apparent for improved learning to be sustained -

- (1) participants' reactions

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<sup>24</sup> A mentor is trusted to advise, guide and help an inexperienced person. In formal learning contexts mentoring functions can be understood as providing support, challenge, and vision (Daloz 1990) [www.ekhut.nhs.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink](http://www.ekhut.nhs.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink)

- (2) participants' learning
- (3) organisation support and change
- (4) participants' use of new knowledge and skills
- (5) pupils' learning outcomes.

Level (1) represents a low-level response to PD, and Porritt (2009) surmises that CPD evaluators '... [get] stuck at the...level of participants' reactions (happy sheets)' (p.8), uncertain how to make further progress. However, and importantly, 'people really do have to have a positive reaction to the experience before they can learn anything' Guskey cautions (2005, p.2). Participants' learning (L2) entails cognitive, affective or motivational outcomes (Harland & Kinder 1977, cited in Muijs & Lindsay 2007), requiring nurture and support in work contexts during and following CPD input (L3). Knowledge application (L4) involves lower-level practical skills, or declarative/propositional knowledge – facts, abstract knowledge of principles or ideas (Knight 2002, cited in Muijs & Lindsay 2007). The impact on pupil learning (L5) may be determined by improved outcomes though 'The many different initiatives in schools ...make it difficult to disentangle the impact of any CPD programme from other factors and programmes in the school' (Muijs & Lindsay 2007, p.199). Each aspect requires a different evaluation format, including (L4) - growth of participant knowledge and practice change over time.

Opportunities to capitalise on teachers' professional growth, disseminate and apply 'new' knowledge and align it with school policy are easily missed for lack of long-term planning. A principled yet simple approach to ensure learning outcomes are agreed during planning was developed by *The London Centre of Leadership Learning* - '... establishing the current practice of *baseline* is vital to help colleagues articulate the quality and depth of the subsequent *impact* following PD on adult practice and young people's learning' (Porritt 2009, p.8). Perhaps goals could be realised more often if deliberate consultation with participants to anticipate learning outcomes was routinised.

## **What do we know about CPD that works? – A summary**

The challenge is to create effective CPD opportunities to build teachers' capacity to meet the increasingly complex picture of teaching and learning in 21<sup>st</sup> century schools, as part of a national effort to raise standards. Owing to their professional status teachers are required to adopt a learning mantle within their organisations and for their professional selves, but CPD as currently experienced is not widely known for embracing research-informed practice. However, I have argued that much has been learnt about what characterises effective CPD e.g. inquiry models allowing for challenge to individuals' beliefs where applicable; small groups to support collaboration; critical reflection and feedback/forward processes to strengthen practice and modify theory; mentoring and coaching in familiar environments to improve practice; mixed methods and CPD of sufficient length to support sustained change.

Head teachers have the role of ensuring that their teachers engage in the most powerful PD models and are supported to develop and extend their learning within the school community. In this way, they will have done all that they can to make a difference to pupils' attainment, since teachers with expertise in their chosen field have been shown to be of more influence than any other aspect of school life (Hattie 2009). However, many factors may combine to hinder or thwart e.g. head teacher knowledge and understanding of the purpose of CPD, time, and budget priorities.

Establishing a convincing linkage between two further aspects - teachers' increased understandings and improved practice leading to pupils' raised attainment (*Figure 2.1*) - is the substance of the following section, in which I examine how 'expertise' has been defined, and consider the relationship between it and raised standards in pupils as a result of effective CPD. I cite research where qualities or features of teaching portrayed as effective, excellent or expert have been identified. While it is reasonable to assume that the yardstick for recognition of expert pedagogy is enhanced attainment in all pupils, it has taken time to establish a secure correlation, despite considerable focus in this area.

## **Expert teaching and raised pupil attainment – the problem and power of establishing the connection**

In this study teacher-participants are seen to gradually develop self-perceptions of expertise; thus it seems essential to attempt a definition of how the concept of expertise might be understood in an educational context.

### ***Expertise: towards a definition?***

In popular thinking it is the ability to achieve at a consistently high level that distinguishes the expert from a novice or less experienced person in a field e.g. the notion of wide recognition for reliability of a skill (e.g. concert pianist) or technique (e.g. bomb defusal); or respect for one whose capacity for judging or deciding rightly or wisely in specific problem-solving situations – ‘I’d ask him, he’s an expert!’ Someone with extensive knowledge in a particular domain, perhaps derived from primary research (e.g. academic), or through experience (e.g. high altitude mountaineer) or arising from a specialism (e.g. kidney dialysis nurse practitioner) may be regarded as an expert in their field, one who has been ‘taught by practice’ (Chambers English Dictionary 1990; CED). A common supposition is that an expert is someone ‘who knows all the answers’, but in reality it is more likely to be experts, skilled in their field and aware of their accomplishments, who recognise more than most their relative lack of knowledge when compared with what is knowable.

### ***Expertise: ‘a facility of performance in...’***

More formal definitions of professional expertise are not readily found. However, a characterisation emerging from Yelder’s (2004) study in the field of medical imaging in New Zealand may be helpful. It suggests that -

Professional expertise is embodied by practising professionals who work with consistently high standards of knowledge, performance and process. The high standards include their professional attitudes, and the manner in which they conduct intra and interpersonal relationships. They integrate and transform these dimensions into flexible, fluid practice, working effectively with change (p.78).

Central to this explanation is the sense that experts are at ease with the recognition that comes with their status; that expert practice does not provoke

undue stress, but rather reveals 'flexible, fluid practice' or a 'facility of performance' (CED 1990).

Wood (1998) contrasts the novice, one 'whose concentration is likely to be fully engaged in monitoring and making sense of immediate events, [with] the expert [who] can appreciate what is currently happening in the wider context' (p.92), while Bransford *et al.*, (1999) remark on the -

... extensive knowledge that affects what they [experts] notice and how they organise, represent, and interpret information in their environment. This in turn, affects their abilities to remember, reason, and solve problems (p.31).

There is much too in the literature about 'adaptive expertise' (Hatano & Inagaki 1986, cited in Bransford *et al.*, 1999). In novel problem-solving situations the expert draws flexibly on what has been learnt in previous encounters and recognises if and when new or fresh responses are required.

The features of expertise extend to attitudinal matters - 'The synergy that occurs in expert practice is a subtle and dynamic relationship of skills, knowledge, cognitive processes, experience, attitudes and personality, which transforms practice into an "art"' (Yielder 2004, p.67).

### ***Stages of expert development?***

The work of Dreyfus (2004), *The Five-Stage Model of Skill Acquisition*, traces development from novice to expert stages using illustrations from learning to drive and playing chess. Although often cited, there are difficulties in such a model, namely that it does not allow for the complexities created by all too human non-linear development. Discrete descriptors at each stage do not permit a profile of skill acquisition which overlaps the stages or cycles back and forth through expert development at new applications. Further, there is a danger of inferring that there is little more learning to do when one is deemed to have reached the expert 'stage'. Indeed, some prefer not to call expertise a stage at all, suggesting that it is 'more a description of a type of practice, rather than necessarily a successive level of achievement' (Fook *et al.*, 2000, p.185). This proposal fits well with Yielder's characterisation and the CED definition and

allows for further learning. In the area of teaching, expertise is in any case a relative construct, assuming varying forms across countries and changing regularly to mirror political context, education policy, specific cultural norms or curricular expectations.

However, Dreyfus' model may still help us understand more about expertise. In the author's view the expert stage is recognised by -

... the ability to make more subtle and refine discriminations...to distinguish those situations requiring one reaction from those demanding another... allowing the immediate intuitive situational response that is characteristic of expertise (p.180).

Although he seems to imply that expertise is intuitive, Dreyfus also indicates that the expert's discernment of situations requiring one response or another is established and confirmed through experience, so that expert responses merely *appear* intuitive. It is argued that if intuition characterises the expert stage and it is difficult to define or discuss *because* it is intuitive, those eager to achieve at a higher level cannot know how to get there (Fook *et al.*, 2000). Intuition seems to be associated, but is not identical to 'talent' which is discussed below, while the role of experience is nevertheless important.

### ***Expertise through experience?***

A chicken and egg debate regarding the salience of talent or deliberate practice persisted throughout the early years of studying expertise (Berliner 2001). The hypothesis that expert teachers possess an inborn ability to teach continues to challenge researchers and teachers, not helped by the tendency of teachers to practise in isolation, or a lack of language with which to describe, analyse and interpret classroom interactions. Such a dispositional explanation militates against the potential of further professional learning.

Some have believed that experience can provide the litmus test of excellence (Scott & Dinham 2008). To explore this theory Lopez (1995, cited in Berliner 2004) analysed test data from c.6000 teachers and c.100000 pupils, comparing pupils' scores with their teachers' professional experience. Pupil attainment steadily increased within the first seven years of a teacher's career, a trend

seemingly pointing to a gradual growth of subject and pedagogical content knowledge. Beyond the seventh year it plateaued, slightly declining in teachers' final working years.

However, if it is true that experience does not *of itself* determine expertise, it is also a myth that 'teachers are born not made' (Scott & Dinham 2008, p.115). Teaching is not instinctive, but rather a complex and multi-faceted profession involving the acquisition of many skills and a considerable knowledge base. Berliner (2004) cites exemplary teachers who believe it takes four and a half years to develop the expertise required for complex teaching roles, but suggests that mixed methods - mentoring, coaching, observation (e.g. through lesson study (Lewis & Tsuchida 1998)) - and deliberate practice may accelerate the process. It is also suggested that teachers may achieve competence more as a result of critical reflection on experience, than as a result of experience itself (Berliner 1988).

In research aiming to discover if and how literacy teachers could achieve 'excellent characteristics' more rapidly if CPD matched IRA<sup>25</sup> goals as closely as possible, the qualities of pre-service teachers were compared with six 'Excellent Reading Teacher Characteristics' (IRA 2000, cited in Griffith *et al.*, 2010; *Appendix O*). Qualitative data were collected at the beginning and end of a reading methods course to establish which aspects supported the development of excellence. As teachers became familiar with the first assessment routine (*An observation survey of early literacy achievement*, Clay 2005), they were freed up to focus on another schedule - '*Kidwatching: Documenting children's literacy development*' (Owocki & Goodman 2002), and to 'decision making' (Swafford *et al.*, 1996). The research showed that pre-service teachers were not inclined to develop excellent reading teacher characteristics independently. However when scaffolded in classroom settings they began to exhibit the IRA's characteristics to 'varying degrees'. This compares well with studies cited earlier where teachers learnt more effectively in situ (Elmore 2000; Neuman & Cunningham 2008). Thus while experience *per*

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<sup>25</sup> International Reading Association

se does not lead to excellence, it is nevertheless an important factor in its development.

### ***Expert teachers do differ from experienced teachers***

Pupils' characteristics account for 50 per cent of variance in scholastic achievement, and teachers for a further 30 per cent, more than all other factors combined e.g. home, peers, school or school leadership, claims Hattie (2003). His interest lay in determining the difference between experienced and excellent teachers, in order to inform the design of the most appropriate CPD curriculum. Using an extensive research base, features distinguishing the sets of teachers were pinpointed. Characteristics included - 're-presentations' of their subject, guiding learning through classroom interactions, monitoring learning and providing feedback, attending to affective attributes and influencing pupil outcomes. From these five major dimensions a model of 16 detailed prototypic attributes of expertise was hypothesised and subsequently rigorously evaluated in over 300 classrooms under the auspices of NBPTS.<sup>26</sup> Effect sizes for expert teachers were greatest in three dimensions – student challenge, deep re-presentation of subject matter, and monitoring/feedback processes. Hattie concludes that -

Students ... taught by expert teachers exhibit an understanding of the concepts targeted in instruction that is more integrated, more coherent, and at a higher level of abstraction than the understanding achieved by other students (*ibid.* p.15).

More recently Hattie has produced a synthesis of 800 meta-analyses relating to the influences on achievement of school-aged pupils. His principal message is that while much is now known about what works best in schools and what helps to increase pupils' learning, little of that information is used in classrooms – 'Too often we shy away from using this word [excellent], thinking that excellence is unobtainable in schools' (2009, p.ix).

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<sup>26</sup> National Board of Professional Teacher Standards (1987 US). 'The NBPTS is a system of advanced, voluntary certification for K-12 teachers, based on six site-based portfolio exercises and four on-demand assessment center exercises – and these constitute the most comprehensive assessment of teaching yet devised' (Hattie 2003, p.10)



### ***Expert literacy teachers use a range of approaches***

Using insights from effectiveness research, Wray & Medwell (2000) sought to understand the nature of effective teaching of literacy specifically. 'Effective' teachers (n=228) were identified by advisory staff in several LAs and selected on the basis of pupils' above-average gains<sup>27</sup>. Lesson observations and interviews (n=26) garnered data alongside a comparison group of 'ordinary' teachers (n=71). The effective literacy teachers were found to demonstrate -

- a stimulating classroom environment and brisk pace
- elements of regular routine, progress monitoring and frequent refocusing of pupils' attention to the task
- carefully managed lesson introductions and plenaries
- abundant use of modelling for demonstration
- a wide range of questioning techniques to scaffold learning.

The authors concluded that - '...it is possible to discern some common characteristics in the literacy teaching practices of effective teachers...several of these appear not to be uniformly present in the literacy teaching of teachers in general (p.83).

Brooks (2004) criticises this study on the grounds of its methodology (small sub-sample of those observed and interviewed), reliability (recommendations were based on tentative evidence only), the lack of a common identification method for less-effective and effective teachers and a small comparison group; however, its findings are seen to complement those of Hattie (2003) and Hall and Harding (2003 - *below*) and are somewhat similar to Brooks' (2007) own recommendation that specific items (e.g. phonological skills) are best taught within a rich curriculum and broad approach.

A meta-analysis of effective teachers of literacy by Hall & Harding (2003, cited in Flynn 2007) endorses this emphasis of eclectic approaches -

The 'effective' teacher of literacy uses an unashamedly eclectic collection of methods, which represents a balance between the direct teaching of

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<sup>27</sup> LA recommendations were cross-checked with national data, inspection reports & head teachers' objective evidence of effectiveness

skills and more holistic approaches...they balance direct skills teaching with a more authentic, contextually grounded literacy activities. They avoid the partisan adherence to any one sure-fire approach or method (p.139).

### ***Expertise is evidenced through pupils' results – establishing the connection?***

Distinguishing teaching expertise as a result of pupils' success evidenced in higher achievement seems a natural corollary, yet this option has tended to be rejected until recently, since it is immensely complex and evaluates classroom performance only indirectly (Berliner 2001). Many factors e.g. prior learning, social class, peer effects, teacher and pupil turnover, within school and year variation are inevitably involved. However, research claiming to establish strong causal relationships between expert pedagogues and pupils' academic achievement is presented in Hanushek & Rivkin (2006, p.18) citing earlier findings –

Hanushek (1992) shows that teachers near the top of the quality distribution can get an entire year's worth of additional learning out of their students compared to those near the bottom 16. That is, a good teacher will get a gain of 1.5 grade level equivalents while a bad teacher will get 0.5 year for a single academic year.

Similarly, the McKinsey Report presents data on the effect of teacher quality demonstrating its impact on pupil performance more than any other variable -

On average two students with average performance (50<sup>th</sup> percentile) would diverge by more than 50 percentile points over a 3 year period depending on the teacher they were assigned (Sanders & Rivers 1996, cited in McKinsey 2007, p.16).

While this evidence sounds convincing, Madaus *et al.*, (2009) warn of our willingness to 'trust[s] numbers. We like tests because they provide numeric scores' (p.22), suggesting that numbers are only part of the story. 'High stakes testing', on which these data rely as a measurement tool, comes with both advantages and disadvantages. Amongst the negative effects there are complexities around test validity (including reliability), and dangers of 'teaching to the test', with a resultant narrowing of the curriculum and an accompanying decrease in teacher morale. Stobart (2008) in contrast, accepts that teachers' accountability and a stress on the expectation of improvement are amongst the

benefits of such testing. However, the data cited in McKinsey relating to the quality of teachers as the main driver of improvement in schools is replicated in several studies, each one referenced in the Report and boosting its credibility, so that McKinsey (*op.cit.*) concludes –

Studies that take into account all of the available evidence on teacher effectiveness suggest that students placed with high-performing teachers will progress three times as fast as those placed with low-performing teachers (p.15).

## **Developing expertise - a summary**

Professionals in their chosen field are understood to be experts when they achieve at a consistently high level, with performances characterised by ‘flexible, fluid practice’. Experience plays a part in developing experts, but is insufficient alone. Although a variety of exemplars of expert pedagogy linked with higher pupil attainment has been a source for teachers to model and emulate for some time, it is only recently that the seemingly reasonable, but hard-to-prove association between outstanding teachers and pupils’ raised outcomes has been confirmed, a theme unambiguously echoed in the message of the government white paper, *The Importance of Teaching* (DFE 2010). Establishing a persuasive linkage between these two further aspects of the ideal model (*Figure 2.1*) has been the purpose of this section on teacher expertise. The necessity for improvement in pupil outcomes to raise the profile of English educational attainment on the world stage has brought the issue of outstanding teachers to the fore of government thinking.

I now turn to what has been termed ‘the human side of school change’ (Evans 1996) and provide a brief theoretical context to data emerging as important in this study and related to this theme.

## **The ‘human side of change theories’ (Bussell 2001)**

Many teachers are motivated by moral purpose and vision for their work in schools (Fullan 1995) and it is often the challenge and possibility of success with pupils that draw teachers to the classroom. Intensive CPD, frequently linked with educational reform, may make additional demands of teachers for

higher levels of personal and professional change (Saunders 2012), irrespective of their willingness to engage in it. We should not be surprised if intense feelings are experienced when dealing with complex and challenging learning -

When you begin to wrestle with people's deeply held, private, intuitive theories, you are engaging them in a process that is as deeply emotional as it is cognitive. This is why conceptual change is so difficult to negotiate. Where there is no pain, I suspect there has not been much conceptual change. The emotional aspect is something we have to learn to deal with... The unexamined life may not be worth living, but it is surely more comfortable while you are living it (Shulman 2000, p.131).

Without sensitive leadership and effective collegial support teachers deeply affected by theoretical challenge may be hurt or damaged, and perhaps lost to the educational system (Hargreaves 2005).

Here I consider the coexistence of teachers' emotions and cognitions (Hascher 2010) and the influence of each upon the other in the socio-cultural context of schools (Nias 1996). I explore and adopt the construct of 'vulnerability', a state in which teachers find themselves merely because they are teachers, according to Keltchermans (1996). I briefly examine a link between self-efficacy and motivation.

### ***Teaching and learning are emotional experiences***

It is argued that 'Affectivity is of fundamental importance in teaching and to teachers,' (Nias 1996, p.293) primarily because teachers often feel passionately about their pupils, their professional skill and all aspects of schooling impacting on their professional efficacy. In the teaching context emotions are understood to be 'experiences that result from teachers' embeddedness in and interactions with their professional environment' (Kelchtermans 2005, p.996), their intensity revealing that much is 'at stake' generally and specifically during periods of change. Teachers' passion may be manifested positively as in Hattie's (2009) commentary -

We rarely talk about passion in education, as if doing so makes the work of teachers seem less serious, more emotional than cognitive, somewhat biased or of lesser import...The key components of passion for the teacher and for the learner appear to be the sheer thrill of being a learner and a teacher, the absorption that accompanies the process of teaching

and learning, the sensations in being involved in the activity of teaching and learning, and the willingness to be involved in deliberate practice to attain understanding (p.23).

Conversely, emotions experienced in the everyday existence of teachers may be negative - frustration, powerlessness, resistance, loss of self-esteem - for any number of reasons, frequently beyond teachers' control. Hargreaves (1994) quotes a participant in a study by Tucker (EAP; date omitted) who implies that low self-esteem, fear and insecurity are widespread amongst her colleagues –

Teachers are the hardest professionals on themselves. We do not want anybody in the classroom watching us teach because we might not be doing something right. We might be doing something we shouldn't be doing. We've just been so programmed that there are right ways of doing things. We don't want somebody finding out what's happening in our classroom...We are very insecure as a profession (p.150).

While this quotation raises questions about teachers who are anxious to such a degree about 'doing something right', it exposes a deep-rooted vulnerability, in this instance possibly originating in a rigid interpretation of curriculum practice or dread of inspection.

Individuals react to educational change in diverse ways, while the experience of CPD is also received differently with complex interacting factors. When teachers operate consistently within their value systems e.g. acting in accord with an agreed policy, self-efficacy belief is experienced positively. Achieving success with pupils who have proved difficult to teach can produce deep satisfaction, heighten motivation and increase self-efficacy according to Spillane *et al.*, (2002).

However, teachers challenged to modify or alter an aspect of pedagogy as in this study, may react negatively e.g. by resistance (My way is better), regret (I wish I'd known about this earlier), loss of pride or perceived status (Being told how to do this is humiliating), or may oppose change altogether if they feel they are being asked to abandon all they have previously learned and valued (Huberman & Miles 1984). In much CPD where there is a clear intention to modify pedagogy (e.g. NLS 1998), an additional effect may be to impinge on or undermine teachers' sense of professional self-efficacy, since teachers infer

that their current practice is wrong or inferior. Thus it is suggested that due to teachers' relative lack of control (e.g. over curricular decisions generated by government or school), their basic state is one of 'vulnerability', typified 'not [as] an emotion but [as] the structural condition teachers...find themselves in' (Keltchermans 2005, p.998). The judgements or comments of others e.g. Ofsted, head teachers, or parents are viewed as contributory factors.

Conceptualising vulnerability in this way increases awareness of the emotional environment in schools. Since teachers invest so much of their 'selves' in work, there is a danger of personal and professional identities merging, with the pursuit of self-esteem and fulfilment located solely in the classroom (*ibid.*). However, without a degree of vulnerability pedagogical interactions cannot occur at all, learning cannot take place and the likelihood of teachers ever feeling they have 'made a difference' is slim. Vulnerability is used as a lens through which to consider this study's participants' personal narratives.

### ***Self-esteem, self-efficacy beliefs affect motivation***

Teachers' self-esteem, a way of regarding oneself or attributing value, is closely associated in this context with the employment of professional skill and a sense of effectiveness. It is similar in meaning to self-efficacy belief, the confidence that one is competent to achieve explicit goals. According to Bandura (1994) -

Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave,' (p.1).

Self-efficacy belief is the driving force governing perseverance in times of difficulty, and a motivating factor when feedback is constructive, but demanding. The challenge may be perceived as surmountable if self-efficacy is sufficient. Other factors e.g. age or life experiences, SMT support, school vision or career prospects may be at work to develop an individual's self-efficacy.

## **Conclusion: 'If I believe this, I will do something differently than if I do that...'**

With reference to recent literature in the field I have argued that –

1. Professional learning as much as teaching should be valued in schools, becoming teachers' core activity (Sachs 2003), so that schools might be regarded as *learning organisations* and teachers as those in a *learning profession*. With CPD models that engage and stimulate intellectually through inquiry models or PLCs, teachers can continue to learn concurrently with students, resulting in a 'direct connection between learning and application [which] increases meaning for the teacher and potential impact on the students' (Loucks-Horsely 1995, p.268). This may involve significant shifts in the value systems and policies of schools and in the ways teachers regard themselves, but it is foundational to the rethinking of teacher professionalism. It signals a process of gradual transformation of identity played out in classrooms and beyond -

Because learning transforms who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity. It is not just an accumulation of skills and information, but also a process of becoming – to become a certain person, or conversely to avoid becoming a certain person (Wenger 1998, p.215).

2. Teachers in England not only require quality CPD and are entitled to it, but are now promised it (DFE 2011). Providing a good 'fit' professional development model for practising teachers as a vital lever towards improvement is one policy response to the problem of lack of incentives perceived by teachers (OECD TALIS 2008). Internationally, relatively few teachers participate in professional development that either satisfies or influences their work positively. However, a recent *House of Commons Education Committee Report* (April 2012) recommends -

...that the Government consult on the quality, range, scope and content of a high-level strategy for teachers' professional development, and with an aim of introducing an entitlement for all teaching staff as soon as feasible (p.8).

As a result of the increasing marketisation of education (Kenway *et al.*, 1994, cited in Sachs 2003), accredited providers now compete to sell CPD to meet

schools' requirements, but the forms and substance of CPD noted as effective in shaping expert teachers and leading to higher pupil attainment are likely to come at a price. Before investing in CPD, head teachers are wise to consider the overall purpose, efficacy, and potential for incorporation to whole school policy and practice, alongside impact evaluation.

3. Expertise is attainable, but is perhaps best perceived as '...a description of a type of practice, rather than ...a successive level [or stage] of achievement' (Fook *et al.*, 2000 p.185). This applies also to *teaching* expertise where a desire to continue to develop professionally, openness to new learning, and experiences of CPD known to be effectual in impacting both teachers' cognitions and practice can produce steady improvement. Belief in one's efficacy is strengthened when pupils' raised attainment is evidenced (*Figure 2.1*), even when improvement with some pupils may be minimal, as in this study.

4. Yet, as Dadds advises - 'The journey of professional growth into new and better practices is often unpredictable; often non-linear; often emotional as well as cerebral' (1997, p.37). When confronted with unfamiliar understandings or challenging perspectives, teachers may feel uncomfortable at least for a time; this 'emotionally intense process' of changing teaching practice (Scott & Sutton, cited in Saunders 2012, p.25) is an essential part of dealing with uncertainty and may herald cognitive growth and change.

By returning to Loucks-Horsley's insightful observation - 'If I believe this, I will do something differently than if I believe that...,' I highlight the major role of effective CPD to address teachers' beliefs, attitudes and dispositions paralleled with changes enacted pedagogically. When combined, these impact on teachers' developing expertise and pupils' attainment.

In Chapter Three I shift focus to account for the methodology adopted and methods selected to conduct this study. I clarify the epistemological perspectives underlying the research, explain the design and describe the qualitative methods chosen to gather and analyse data. Brief characterisations



of the participant group are included together with a synopsis of ethical considerations underpinning the study.

## CHAPTER THREE – Design and methods

In this chapter I present the ‘natural history of the inquiry’ (Erickson 1986, cited in Robson 2002) - an explanation of what was done by whom and how in order to explore and address my research question, and a laying out of the research process ‘for the scrutiny of the observer’ (Crotty 1998, p.13). I describe and justify the qualitative research tools I selected to gather and analyse my data including examples of decision-making where applicable. I provide a summary of the ethical principles and practices adopted to guide the study’s conduct.

### The research process

Four interrelated elements are basic to the social research process – establishing one’s theoretical research perspectives, locating an epistemological approach, selecting an appropriate methodology and selecting methods of data collection most suitable to address the research question. While the research focus or question drives the study, the theoretical perspectives adopted in relation to that focus, the epistemology, research design and methods must hold the potential to inform each other for the research to fulfil its intended outcome (Crotty 1998). The elements employed in this qualitative research, rationales for their choice and explanations that link their relationship to the whole, are detailed here.

### The research question

I set out intending to explore the research question – *‘What is the impact of extended professional development in early literacy acquisition on the personal and professional perspectives of Year 1 teachers?’* Of specific interest were –

- teachers’ initial understandings about early literacy learning processes
- the nature of (any) changes occurring to their understandings and beliefs
- the CPD components participants considered to have had the greatest influence on their beliefs about literacy acquisition.

It is suggested that in qualitative research ‘Research questions can be decided late in the study...if the original questions make little sense in the light of the

perspectives you have studied' (Gibbs 2007, p.3). This was pertinent to my research. During the latter stages of data analysis, it became apparent that the area of study to which I wished to give fuller attention was less about specific understandings relating to literacy acquisition and more about participants' personal and professional theories changed or changing as a result of CPD and evidenced in the data generated. For example, participants' perspectives about how they were learning as adults – through frequent reflection on practice, by observing demonstration lessons led by an 'expert' or one they considered as such, or through apparent mismatch of expectation and experience; or theoretically, how they aligned new understandings with already deeply-held theories about literacy acquisition; or regarding their identities as teachers, how through the influence of their specific CPD they perceived themselves as those developing expertise in a specialist area, and/or as continuing learners. As I drew closer to the data through the analytical stages, I became interested in pursuing the following questions and exploring the corresponding themes emerging from the data –

- In what ways did participants' approaches to their own learning change?
- How did participants' self-perceptions in relation to expertise develop?
- How were participants' emotions affected during the CPD period and what is the relationship between these and their drive to attain their learning goals?

These are the questions I seek to explore and discuss in Chapters Four and Five.

## **Theoretical perspectives**

### ***Interpretivism***

I wanted to develop a deeper understanding from the participants' viewpoints, of what happens to teachers' personal and professional perspectives when they commit to advanced learning for a substantial period. I selected an interpretivist approach to methodology as it is predicated on a view of participants as active meaning-seeking individuals whose views of the world are valued by the

researcher, who in turn is concerned to represent their ideas as faithfully as possible (Gibbs 2007).

Qualitative research is about interpreting the speech and actions of participants, therefore language is important as both the object of the research and the medium conveying participants' meaning (Robson 2002). In practice the researcher is attempting throughout to work out what is happening and what it all means in the research context, without making value judgements or seeking to induce change, as Hennink *et al.*, explain –

The interpretive...approach seeks to understand people's lived experience from the perspective of the people themselves which is often referred to as the *emic* ... or 'inside' perspective. This involves studying the subjective meanings that people attach to their experiences; so rather than focusing on facts ...qualitative researchers seek to 'understand subjective meaningful experiences and 'the meaning of social actions within the context in which people live.'... the interpretive paradigm recognises that reality is *socially constructed* as people's experiences occur within social, cultural, historical or personal contexts' (2011, p.14).

However, the *etic* or outsider's perspective is unavoidably involved as the researcher brings to the task her own subjective assumptions, viewpoints and beliefs, necessitating reflexivity especially during the data collection and analysis processes - '[taking] constant stock of ...actions and their role in the research process, and [subjecting] these to the same critical scrutiny as the rest of their "data"' (Mason 1996, cited in Hennink *et al.*, *ibid.*). This heightens awareness of the researcher's own identity or background e.g. in this study context, as a Reading Recovery National Leader, I may have appeared or presented differently to those pursuing CPD in *RR*, than to those following *SSP/CPD*.

The idea that research can be value-free is questioned in the interpretative paradigm. Although it may be possible to refrain from active involvement (e.g. deliberately not commenting on a lesson observation), the reality of researcher presence (observing, note-taking, audio-taping) may alter the situation under focus, while the researcher's background and values inevitably influence each aspect.

This explorative case study, the goal of which was to examine complex theoretical and practical change over time in teachers engaged in CPD, seemed to fit the interpretive paradigm. An example from this study's data may help to illustrate how I have sought to study the subjective meanings that my participants have attached to their CPD experience. When asked to reflect on the impact of the PD on her knowledge base, one participant, Di<sup>28</sup>, suggests that – '*[It]... has been breaking down what I know*' (D/3/12)<sup>29</sup>. Prompted to clarify, she explains that it is her '*assumptions*' that are breaking down and specifically – '*I assume too much of the child...*' From our co-constructed data generation I understand Di to be questioning her own assessment of the pupil, having previously judged that he<sup>30</sup> can do more than is actually the case. For teachers working in depth for the first time with pupils who struggle to develop reading skills, a gradual realisation of what the pupil can do and what he needs to learn next may not be unusual. The pupil leads the observant teacher and as she takes account of the true extent of his difficulties her '*assumptions*' about his learning are 'broken down' and he is engaged as co-learner in the task of literacy acquisition (Clay 2005).

However, the use of '*assumptions*' is intriguing and invites further interpretation: beyond the immediate problem of having over-estimated the current stage of her pupil's development, I take the reference to assumptions and their deconstruction to mean that through the reflective process Di is questioning, revising or transforming her earlier perspectives on literacy acquisition. Thus the interpretative approach encourages 'making sense' of people's experiences as they occur in social contexts. My personal researcher explanation of Di's words is only one of many possible perspectives and as such is presented tentatively. Closely linked to theoretical perspectives is the issue of the kind of knowledge to be attained through this study – '*...how we know what we know and how we can come to know it* (Crotty 1998, p.3).

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<sup>28</sup> Throughout the reporting process pseudonyms are used

<sup>29</sup> (D/3/12) refers to Di's 3rd individual interview; the transcript is to be found on p.12; see *Participants' pseudonyms and coding key*

<sup>30</sup> I have used the masculine personal pronoun when referring to pupils, since the majority of pupils struggling with literacy are boys

## **Epistemology**

### ***Social constructivism***

I have aligned my researcher self with social constructivism, in essence a view that individual and collective reality is socially and uniquely constructed (Robson 2002). With this epistemological stance reality is understood as a dynamic process socially constructed and continuously reproduced, affirmed and reaffirmed by people acting on their personal interpretations of that reality. A constructivist approach suits the nature of the current inquiry as its aim is to explore the viewpoints of teacher participants in their individual professional contexts, and the ways in which they experience and interpret challenges to their theoretical stance as a result of CPD. In line with social constructivism it is likely, for example, that two teachers attending the same PD may construct knowledge in quite different ways depending on a range of factors - professional backgrounds, existing understandings, self-perception as teachers, or worldviews. Active involvement in the learning process is a feature of social constructivism in which inquiry methods dominate - hypothesising, evaluating, active reflecting, critique and questioning - as opposed to more traditional, often passive approaches to learning.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research design***

I selected case study, or a series of case studies, as being the research design most conducive to the fulfilment of my goals. Yin's (2003) definition of case study delineates this research design as 'a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, using multiple sources of evidence' (p.13). The 'strategy for doing research' in this study was flexible and the purpose exploratory; the 'empirical investigation' was dependent on collecting evidence pertinent to the research focus - here, data from multiple sources; the 'particular contemporary phenomenon' is the object of the research and refers here to the impact of literacy-focused CPD on teacher-participants in the 'real life contexts' of primary schools.

Case study design with its detailed focus and the immersion of the researcher in the setting, offers potential for understanding empirical findings within the complexity of educational contexts (Bassey 1999), thus suitable for this study with its variety of learning environments. The case study researcher –

...typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit – a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community. The purpose...is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life-cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalisations about the wider population to which that unit belongs (Cohen & Manion 1989, cited in Bassey, *ibid.*).

Generalisation remains a contentious issue in case study goals, but it was not my intention to generalise from this study as the data set is small, other than to specify what this was a 'case of'. The 'study of a bounded system' (Smith 1980, cited in Stake 1995, p.2) – here a number of dispersed teachers, who have in common their engagement in year-long CPD - can nevertheless offer remarkable insights to the research community.

Adelman *et al.*, (1980, cited in Bassey 1999) suggest its further advantages –

Case studies recognise the complexity and 'embeddedness' of social truths. By carefully attending to social situations, case studies can represent something of the discrepancies or conflicts between the viewpoints held by participants (p.23).

In this study, the purpose was not to compare or focus on differences across teachers, LAs or literacy approaches; rather, by using a range of qualitative data methods, the goal was to allow access to a range of participants' perspectives to maximise the potential of increasing conceptual understandings and hypothesising theoretical connections. Case study is 'concerned with a rich and vivid description of events... a chronological narrative...blends a description with... analysis... focuses on individual actors...and seeks to understand their perceptions of events...' (extracted from Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p. 182).

## ***Grounded theory***

The grounded theorists Strauss & Corbin (1990) claim that –

Formulating theoretical perspectives of data grounded in reality provides a powerful means both for understanding the world 'out there' and for developing action strategies that will allow for some measure of control over it (p.9).

Understanding or trying to understand the world '*out there*' was my intention. Developing concepts and hypotheses through data analysis and the emerging themes, rather than using analysis to test pre-formulated theories, offered potential to realise that goal. I decided that data analysis in this study would be guided by a grounded theory *type of approach* (Glaser & Strauss 1967), the objective of which is to move from description to explanation to generation of theory that can yield new insight into the situation being studied - 'Grounded theory allows the relevant social organisation and socio-psychological organisation of the people to be studied to be discovered, to emerge – in their perspective' explains Glaser (1992). By 'progressive focusing' (Parlett & Hamilton 1976, cited in Cohen & Manion 2000, p.148), the researcher sifts and sorts, reviews and reflects until the most pertinent aspects of the data begin to emerge, being 'careful not to force data with his or her own problem and keep an open mind to the emergence of the subjects' problem' (Glaser 1992, p. 23), gradually narrowing the focus. Realistically, Gibbs suggests that to start with a perfectly clean sheet is near impossible - '...it is very hard for analysts to eliminate completely all prior frameworks. Inevitably qualitative analysis is guided and framed by pre-existing ideas and concepts' (2007, p.5). Aware that I may have absorbed some assumptions and incorporated expectations informed by the reading of relevant literature and my own experiences of engaging in and leading CPD over many years, I describe my analytic process as a grounded theory *type of approach*.



## Methods

### ***Recruitment of research participants***

My design goals seemed to suggest that invited participation from about ten experienced Year 1 teachers would be sufficient for generating in-depth data<sup>31</sup>. That number had the potential to reflect a range of typical recent experience and understanding in the focus area, and was ample to develop theoretical insights, allowing for slight attrition. Collecting data from these participants was practicable. To recruit experienced teachers undertaking year-long literacy CPD in systematic, synthetic phonics (SSP), I referred to LA consultants through an informal network of contacts. Recruiting even three willing participants proved challenging as in many LAs, the national focus during 2008-9 was on Year 2 and the sustained progress of the first cohort of children to receive SSP. However, some LAs were re-running SSP/PD for Year 1 teachers who had missed it.

Gaining the involvement of teachers in their *Reading Recovery/Initial Professional Development (RR/IPD)* year was relatively straightforward due to the mediation of colleagues in the Reading Recovery National Network. These teachers had already been selected for *RR/IPD* by their head teachers due to their interest, links with an existing post or influence in school. *RR/IPD* groups normally include a range of teacher experience and ability and a mix of those who 'volunteer' and those who are 'sent.'

In total, nine participants, all unknown to me, were recruited by early September. Beyond the need for each to be an experienced Year 1 teacher and participating in CPD throughout 2008-9, I did not declare preferences or criteria for inclusion, nor did I exclude any participant, thus reducing the possibility of researcher bias at the selection stage. Four LAs from North West England and East/West Midlands were represented.

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<sup>31</sup> Year One teachers were selected as most formal teaching using SSP is achieved in that NC year; *RR* also concentrates on pupils Year One though not exclusively. If pupils are beginning to struggle it is usually evident between the ages of 5-6 years

I quickly realised that I had individual participants of considerable experience and knowledge in the area of literacy learning. They were prepared to and in some cases were already proficient at reflecting critically on their own practice and understandings. Most appeared confident in their own pedagogical skills, and there were grounds for confidence that they would generate insightful data to inform the research question posed at the outset of this study. The exception was Peter who was noticeable as lacking professional self-assurance.

### ***Attrition***

Subsequently one teacher withdrew from the study as the *ECaR* programme was terminated in school (January 2009). A crisis among the school staffing had emerged and she was required to resume class teaching. Her data were not analysed or reported here.

### ***Participants' professional background***

*Table 3.1* presents information regarding participants' age, academic qualifications, teaching experience and types of CPD pursued. I anticipated that participants would have a KS-1 background, which would have ensured a baseline level of understandings about literacy instruction on which to build, compare and contrast new learning through CPD. However, it transpired that Peter had no current experience of Year 1 teaching, having taught most recently in nursery. Consequently, although he taught Year 1 pupils in *RR* during 2008-9, he lacked familiarity with the most recent guidance on literacy teaching approaches (e.g. Rose Review (2006) and SVR)<sup>32</sup>. Like many part-time teachers Di and Linda had also missed out on recent CPD due to the nature of their posts. In their survey of CPD in schools Pedder *et al.*, (2008) found that teachers with little experience, at early career stages and without leadership responsibility often experienced a reduced access to a range of CPD opportunities. Other participants were knowledgeable about a variety of mainstream and specialist approaches to literacy acquisition.

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<sup>32</sup> Following a poor Ofsted inspection, Peter had left teaching. He undertook a 'Returners' course and had been teaching successfully for 2 years before this research

### ***Age and experience***

The participants' ages spanned a wide range with Heather, Leila and Eva celebrating 30<sup>th</sup> birthdays during the data collection year. Their teaching experience (not entirely within KS-1) ranged from six to 15 years (mean=10.4 years), though as I have shown experience is neither a guarantor of expertise nor an indication of willingness or aptitude to learn (*Chapter Two*).

### ***In-school responsibilities***

The participants differed greatly in their school responsibilities (*Table 3.1*). Three *SSP* teachers were wholly responsible for Year 1 class teaching (Heather, Leila, Eva). They were employed full-time with permanent contracts, worked in schools receiving intensive literacy support programmes and benefited from CPD available to school-based staff.

The five teachers following *RR/IPD* spent 0.5 of their time teaching the lowest attaining children in Year 1 individually. For Di, employed part-time, *RR* was her sole teaching responsibility. Linda worked part-time for a LA support service in addition to *RR*. Three others in full-time employment taught classes or had alternative duties. All were employed on permanent contracts, though Peter's *RR* role (0.5) was temporary. Their schools received both *ECaR* and/or *SSP* intensified support with extra funding during 2008-9.

### ***Participants' schools***

Schools recognised as being most in need of improvement were strategically targeted by *SSP* or *ECaR* or both, following advice from LA School Improvement Officers. Most schools were contextually similar, with urban or rural social disadvantage impacting pupil attainment. However, in Linda's school, pupils' attainment was broadly within the average range. Due to its effective leadership and management, the LA selected it to trial the *ECaR* programme of layered literacy interventions alongside *SSP* classroom teaching using *Letters and sounds*, as an exemplar. Two schools (Heather and Eva's) had strong, mature implementations of *SSP* and were already noting improvements.

**Table 3.1: Profile of research participants**

Research participant	F/ M <sup>33</sup>	Age band	Qualification	Further qualification	FT/ PT <sup>34</sup>	Role in school	Yrs teaching experience	CPD
Di	F	30-40	B Ed Hons; QTS	N/A	PT	RRT <sup>35</sup> /Art Co <sup>36</sup>	17	RR
Heather	F	20-30	B Ed Hons; QTS	N/A	FT	CLL <sup>37</sup> Lead	7	SSP/AST
Kate	F	40-50	B Ed Hons; QTS	Dip. Beh. Difficulties	FT	RRT/Lit Co <sup>38</sup>	12	RR
Leila	F	20-30	B Ed Hons; QTS	N/A	FT	FS Co <sup>39</sup>	6	SSP
Linda	F	40-50	B Ed Hons; QTS	Maths Recovery teacher	PT	RRT/LSS <sup>40</sup>	16	RR
Peter	M	30-40	BA Hons; PGCE; QTS	N/A	FT Per/temp	Nursery Teacher/RRT	8	RR
Kalvinder	F	50+	BA; PGCE; QTS	Dip. Adv. SEN; M Ed (SEN);	FT	RRT/EY Phs Ldr <sup>41</sup> /SENCo <sup>42</sup>	11	RR
Eva	F	20-30	BA Hons; PGCE; QTS	N/A	FT	Lit Co/ CLL lead/ G & T <sup>43</sup>	6	SSP/Adv

### **Communication**

I had hoped that most communication with participants regarding organisation of visits could take place by e-mail. However, three participants lacked e-mail addresses and two rarely used it. Several subsequently became successful with using e-mail, whilst communication with the others occurred by phone through school secretaries, or intermittent email. This had implications for the frequency

<sup>33</sup> Female or male

<sup>34</sup> Full or part-time

<sup>35</sup> Reading Recovery teacher

<sup>36</sup> Art Coordinator

<sup>37</sup> Communication, Language and Learning, the National Strategy's programme to address language development, word recognition and reading comprehension within EYFS and KS-1 (2007) of which SSP is a part

<sup>38</sup> Literacy Coordinator

<sup>39</sup> Foundation Stage Coordinator

<sup>40</sup> Learning Support Service teacher

<sup>41</sup> Early Years Phase Leader

<sup>42</sup> Special Educational Needs Coordinator

<sup>43</sup> Gifted and Talented Coordinator

and regularity of communication from some participants, including the use of a reflective e-journal (see *Data collection*).

### **CPD pursued by research participants, Sep 2008 - July 2009**

In total, four types of CPD were followed by the teacher-participants during the 11 month period.

#### ***Professional development in systematic, synthetic phonics (SSP)***

Three participants' professional learning focused on SSP with whole classes, although during 2008-9 each was at a different stage in her understanding. CPD using *Letters and sounds* was mediated through a blend of learning opportunities delivered freely in participating LAs –

- by following the guidance of the *Primary Framework for literacy and mathematics* including exemplar materials e.g. (DVD) *Early Reading Curriculum CPD Resource* (DfES 2008)
- by attendance at training for dissemination of aspects of the *Primary Framework* (two half-days termly)
- through feedback on their teaching and peer coaching
- through e-learning modules e.g. *The CLL Essential Knowledge Resource* (DFES 2007)
- through collegial, informal teamwork at KS-1 meetings for moderating teacher assessment
- through staff meetings led by school's LITCo.

The extent to which these opportunities were accessed differed among the three SSP participants. Leila followed a locally administered course in SSP similar to the above pattern, including –

- termly meetings with 20 others
- termly visits from the LA's consultant to plan, observe/participate in demonstration lessons and receive coaching
- DVD (as above), lesson exemplars, handbook and updates, online lesson planning

- submission and monitoring of locally generated data related to the project
- availability of consultant for advice.

Eva had already received basic training in *SSP*, but her responsibility as LITCo was to sustain the momentum of the programme in its second year and act as mentor/coach to teachers in KS-2, so that literacy standards might also be improved in that phase. Her CPD was less intense than Leila's, but involved local cluster meetings and termly released time for dialogue with her consultant regarding the school action research cycle. Her goal was to develop guided reading throughout school. Consultant-led demonstration lessons followed by critical reflection with school staff were used for this purpose.

Heather, as CLL lead, had already introduced *SSP* to school, but in 2008-9 had aspirations to achieve AST<sup>44</sup> status with specialisation in phonics. Her CPD included -

- shadowing the CLL consultant on visits
- teaching demonstration lessons for visiting teachers
- fielding questions about her instructional decisions
- learning how to respond to teachers, including the use of a 'crib sheet'<sup>45</sup>
- coaching/mentoring by her consultant
- keeping up to date with *SSP* developments online.

Thus, Eva and Heather were engaged in both receiving and leading professional development.

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<sup>44</sup> Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs) passed a national assessment and were appointed to a Local Authority (LA)/AST post. Based in their schools, they shared their skills through outreach work for 20 per cent of the week (DFE 2011). The qualification was intended to strengthen teaching and learning through robust leadership, effective training and support for teachers. It enabled excellent classroom-based teachers to remain in the classroom while earning on a higher pay scale. Each AST offered a specialist area. The AST standard has now been withdrawn (HCEC 2012)

<sup>45</sup> Heather's consultant gave her a set of appropriate responses to Frequently Asked Questions to use if necessary

### ***Reading Recovery Initial Professional Development (RR/IPD)***

*RR/IPD* for teachers was led by local teacher leaders (TLs). Teaching and learning with a focus on the lowest-attaining pupils in literacy was mediated through the reciprocal linking of theory and practice by means of –

- four assessment training and 18 fortnightly sessions at a CPD centre
- an emphasis on systematic observation skills during assessment of pupils' early literacy achievement and throughout the *RR* lesson series
- collaborative, constructive discussion in a teacher group
- TL-facilitated critical dialogue at a one-way screen (*Appendix I*) prompted by observation of *RR* lessons in real time
- feedback/feed-forward processes involving the TL and colleagues following lesson observations
- TL/colleague visits to observe lessons; constructive feedback and application of new learning in the individual teaching context
- the study of core texts *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay 2005) and *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals* (Clay 2005a&b).

### ***Similarities and differences***

Between the two main CPD courses (*SSP* and *RR*) there are both similarities and clear differences -

- both CPD routes acknowledge the import of theory-practice links and the power of coaching/mentoring in situ to consolidate learning
- each course is based on an understanding that it takes time for adult learners to modify previous understandings about literacy acquisition and to become informed, skilled practitioners of new methodologies
- the approach to learning is quite different; whereas *RR* is inquiry-led, *SSP* employs didactic instructional methods although discussion is encouraged
- *RR* offers a greater amount of theoretical input and procedural demonstration (fortnightly as opposed to half-termly) and depends

heavily on the PD leader input; *SSP* draws on the *Primary Framework*, *L & S* programme documents, exemplar materials and e-learning

- although tuition occurs within group settings, *SSP* teachers have little opportunity to establish productive professional relationships due to fewer sessions. *RR* teachers rely to a considerable extent on peers to support and extend their learning
- *SSP* (though not necessarily *L & S*) is largely mandated by central government whereas a school may opt into *ECaR*.

## Data collection

Collecting data from several sources is likely to be 'superior, not simply because multi-method approaches allow triangulation of data, but because they are more likely to capture the complex, multifaceted aspects of teaching and learning' (Kagan 1990, p.459). To address the research question, I planned a range of qualitative data collection methods across the academic year (2008-9) -

- a semi-structured individual interview
- two further interviews building on data previously generated, critically reflecting on the participant's accumulating experience
- a lesson observation with stimulated recall and co-constructed reflection immediately after the observation
- reflective e-journals whenever participants wished to contribute.

### *Timetable of data collection*

**Table 3.2: Timetable of data collection**

Data source	Oct 08	Dec 08	Mar/Apr/May 09	June/July 09
Individual interviews	Y	Y		Y
Lesson observation, stimulated recall & co-constructed reflections			Y	
Reflective e-journals	Y	Y	Y	Y



Data collection points were selected to allow for alternative cycles of data analyses to feed forward into the process (*Table 3.2*). Since cognitive change can occur early (Desimone 2009), two interviews were arranged within the early months; these also presented opportunities to establish interpersonal relationships with participants. Originally I intended to interview each participant before the start of their CPD to gather data un-influenced by the professional development. Although university ethical clearance had already been granted, the doctoral school required a 'thesis upgrade panel'. This was a constructive experience; nevertheless, identifying a date for the panel caused the postponement of the earliest interviews by several weeks, and meant that participants were already influenced *somewhat* by the CPD input. The lesson observations at the half-way point allowed for demonstration of theory-practice links as material for anchored discourse. The reflective e-journals permitted note-making, reflection and questioning to occur within participants' own time frames. I met each participant four times, but as *Table 3.3* shows, some communicated on many more occasions.

### ***Semi-structured interviews***

To address the research question and to facilitate a deeper understanding of what was occurring during the CPD period, individual semi-structured and audio-taped interviews<sup>46</sup> were conducted three times across the academic year. Interviews, depicted as 'conversational encounter[s] to some purpose' (Powney & Watts 1987, cited in Tomlinson 1989) allowed for exploration of a complexity of themes and yielded rich data to supplement those obtainable from other sources. Munby (1984) suggests that 'If we are to understand how a teacher might deal with an innovation [such as the presentation of new pedagogical theory], then we must first understand his or her beliefs and principles' (p.28). However, there is often difficulty in accessing these from teachers (Kagan 1990) – teachers are sometimes not consciously aware of the beliefs they hold, or they may be so deeply embedded that they are hard to articulate. Thus, Kagan endorses a series of extended interviews to achieve the purpose and notes 'the time consuming nature of the nature of the methods used to elicit and assess thoughts' (p. 420).

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<sup>46</sup> With permission

**Table 3.3: Data collection October 2008 - July 2009 illustrating participants' varying involvement**

Di	Heather	Kate	Leila	Linda	Peter	Kalvinder	Eva
I'veiw 1	I'veiw 1	I'veiw 1	I'veiw 1	I'veiw 1	I'veiw 1	I'veiw 1	I'veiw 1
Journal 1	Journal 1	Journal 1	I'veiw 2	Journal 1	I'veiw 2	Journal 1	I'veiw 2
Journal 2	I'veiw 2	Journal 2	Less obs/ stim recall	Journal 2	Less obs/ stim recall	I'veiw 2	Less obs/ stim recall
Journal 3	Less obs/ stim recall	I'veiw 2	I'veiw 3	I'veiw 2	I'veiw 3	Less obs/ stim recall	I'veiw 3
Journal 4	I'veiw 3 (by telephone due to my illness)	Journal 3		Journal 3		I'veiw 3	
I'veiw 2		Less obs/ stim recall		Journal 4			
Journal 5		I'veiw 3		Less obs/ stim recall			
Journal 6				Journal 5			
Less obs/ stim recall				Journal 6			
Journal 7				I'veiw 3			
I'veiw 3							

### *Pilot interviews*

To ensure that through the processes of semi-structured interviews I would derive data addressing my research goals, I trialled the format and content with volunteer teacher colleagues and although it was not possible to gain any sense of theories changing over time, I gained valuable insights on both protocol and process –

- to improve clarity, I learnt to break up complex questions into key opener and related probes

- to sustain and deepen the exploration, I adopted the use of informal prompts
- I realised afresh the need for unbiased, open language in question-setting and researcher responses
- I experimented both with and without additional note-taking and decided on the latter option, as it allowed a more natural dialogue with full attention on the respondent.

Following the pilots I refined the questions and areas for discussion, trying to ensure that participants seemed at ease before inviting personal perspectives (*Appendix C – (Sample) Semi-structured Interview (first)*).

### *Interview protocol*

The first interviews were semi-structured to provide a baseline from which change of personal and professional theories might be determined. They consisted of a series of mainly open-ended questions exploring current theory (e.g. the role of a language rich environment for literacy learning) and pedagogy (e.g. how children are taught to problem-solve in reading). Closed questions were posed at times to confirm my understanding (Richardson 1994). By using techniques such as 'active listening', a mix of explicit and implicit messages conveying continued interest in the participant's discourse, and 'continuation responses' (Nelson-Jones 1982, cited in Tomlinson 1989), verbal or non-verbal encouragements to continue or to expand further, I hoped that participants would elaborate on recent learning and puzzle over specific problems aloud. 'Utterance-linking,' (Tomlinson 1989) a way of referring to prior statements without paraphrasing the original terminology was employed specifically during the final interviews to compare and contrast earlier viewpoints. For example, Leila grappled with the issue of pupils who were adding to their phoneme knowledge, but were unable to apply it to simple caption books. Due to these pupils' relative lack of progress using *SSP*, her understandings and views were being negatively influenced. By the end of the year the situation had largely, but not completely resolved and her viewpoints had altered. To clarify her final position, I was able to counter – 'You said in earlier interviews that...'

Most interviews lasted about an hour. Following immediate draft transcription and early analysis, each subsequent interview was tailored individually to reflect and further explore the specific data gathered - 'making inductive references which lead [you] to go deeper into the issues in a next interview' (Hennink *et al.*, 2011,p.43). Each schedule was flexible enough to offer participants opportunities to develop their most recent thoughts (*Appendix F – (Sample) Semi-structured interview (third)*). Inevitably there was repetition, which provided confirmation of persuasive and deeply-felt views.

The interviews were an enjoyable feature of the research process. As well as serving 'to create analytically focused discourse that provides insights into specified research questions' (Wolcott 1994, p.86), they also helped to establish social relationships, build trust and share researcher goals. They were taken seriously and any early nervousness seemed to be quickly dispelled.

#### *Establishing trustworthiness during the interview process*

I consider that good, mutual rapport was established with my participants, but am aware that 'Inter-personal reflexivity recognises that the interview setting and the inter-personal dynamic between researcher and participant can influence knowledge creation' (Hennink *et al.*, *op.cit.* p.20). Gudmundsdottir (1992, cited in Sabar 1994) is concerned specifically about the integrity of 'teacher-thinking' research and warns that 'informants are often keen to please their researchers...The [interview] scene is set for compelling stories that sparkle in their narrative truth' (p.6). Aware of this, especially with the *RR* participants in my position as Reading Recovery National Leader, I sought to avert any such tendencies by reiterating my research objectives before each interview. Of the participant group, Linda occasionally responded in a manner which might be interpreted as 'sparkly' - '*It's [CPD] just fabulous, it really is, it transforms your thinking totally and has influenced my practice in a big way*' (Li/2/5). However, theory is not grounded on a single data sound-bite and the researcher's task is to discover and verify theory from systematic analysis (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Since it was my aim for each participant to talk unreservedly and frankly about their changing cognitions including their

misgivings and uncertainties, humour, anecdotes and the occasional ‘sparkle’ were naturally part of those conversations.

Towards the end of the final interview I invited participants to consider the impact of the interview process - ‘*You’ve made me really think*’ said Leila (Le/3/14), while Heather maintained that I had asked ‘*very deep questions...[It] gets you to stop and think about things*’ (H/3/12). Overall I feel relatively satisfied with the quality of data gathered during the 24 interviews, given my standing as a neophyte researcher. Re-listening to the audio-tapes, there are indeed instances when I regret not delving deeper, but those omissions are outweighed by some rich and insightful data addressing the research questions.

### ***Lesson observation with stimulated recall and co-constructed reflection***

In an attempt to improve trustworthiness, to establish a ‘consistency thesis’ between what the teacher-participants professed to believe or think (Fang 1996) and to determine ‘knowledge-in-action’ (Argyris & Schön 1974), a literacy lesson was observed in the Year 1 environments as appropriate (*Appendices G, H & M: Sample lesson observation notes and stimulated discussion*).

In a discussion of ethical concerns in teacher-thinking research Sabar (1994) questions how the desire of the teacher to receive feedback after an observation can be reconciled with the need to avoid influencing the participant’s behaviour. This was a dilemma. However, the mutually agreed intention of these lessons and afterwards was to seek out and articulate rationales for teaching decisions and actions occurring during the lesson. Using professional skills developed as a Reading Recovery National Leader, I endeavoured to stimulate reflection around the lesson’s key events as we jointly perceived them. By means of my annotations we recalled the detail of instructional episodes and reflected together on what they revealed of the teacher’s pedagogy and the pupil’s learning. In some cases the reflective method did lead to participants’ articulation of new insights or resolve, demonstrating a growth of self-understanding as a product of the act of telling -

'in making explicit [to oneself or others], personally developed understandings of practice,' (Keltchermans 2005, p.1000).

In line with Fang's (1996) 'consistency thesis,' it was clear that for some participants rhetoric outstripped teaching practice, which by the time of the lesson observation had not yet altered sufficiently to reflect new thinking. For others it was unmistakable how much effort was going into the realisation of changing perspectives. Re-positioning the lesson observations later in the PD year would inevitably have produced different results, but undertaking them at the half-way point allowed for the capturing of data *during* the change process.

### ***Reflective e-journal***

The use of diaries as precursors to interview, principally as a means of gathering up prior experiences and thinking, and generating topics for review is recommended (Burgess 1981, cited in Robson 2002). Participants were invited to complete journal entries, regularly reflecting on their professional learning and its impact and e-mailing to me. The impetus behind this data collection method was to capture changes in their professional perspectives as they experienced them, so they were not 'lost' by having to wait until the next data collection point. Although two-way correspondence was not envisaged, I always acknowledged receipt of e-journal entries. Topics were revisited during subsequent interviews, chiefly to establish clarity, but also to re-establish a baseline for further discussion.

The participants were provided with a pro-forma (*Appendix D*) to facilitate the recording of their ideas. With permission I adapted and considerably shortened a format used by a colleague in her Masters dissertation (O'Riordan 2006) through which she asked three questions –

- What impact is this course having on your views about how children learn to read and write? What do you think contributed to these changes?

- What impact is this course having on your views about how teachers teach children how to read and write? What do you think contributed to these changes?
- What impact is this course having on your views about how teachers learn how to teach children to read and write? What do you think contributed to these changes?

Five participants engaged in e-journaling and 18 journal entries were generated altogether. These provided a useful data source for triangulation and another means for participants to express their views, though a written, structured and edited format may not offer the spontaneity or interest of the on-the-spot interview e.g. Linda writes - *'The opportunity to observe two of my colleagues teach at the screen is always a learning experience for me. It makes me feel that I am not alone in delivering a programme that requires the speedy development of skills and expertise whilst assuming the role of "an expert"'* (Li/EJ3/7). Clearly the alternative medium allowed participants increased time to shape responses, and typically the specific questions were neglected while writers recorded whatever seemed most important to them. Twice, without encouragement, the e-journal was used just as Burgess (*op.cit.*) anticipated, as deliberate interview preparation. With hindsight I consider their main value to have been as a means of retaining contact with my research participants and them with me, a positive outcome considering the demands of the research process on their time.

### ***Strengthening validity in this qualitative research***

In considering and combating threats to validity in this qualitative research Maxwell's typology was helpful (1992, cited in Robson 2002). To guard against *inaccuracy*, I audio-taped all interviews and lesson observations and partially transcribed each immediately. Maxwell's second focus is *interpretation*. Since I had selected a grounded theory type approach to data analysis, I endeavoured to concentrate on emerging data, considering various interpretations, rather than imposing a framework. The tendency to ignore other interpretations (*theory*) to understanding the particular phenomenon under study is Maxwell's

third concern. Actively seeking data which seemed dissonant with one's current theory, or 'negative case analysis,' is his response.

### *Member checking*

In advocating trustworthiness and authenticity in naturalistic inquiry, Lincoln & Guba (2007) support a member-checking process for use during the inquiry or when case studies are being developed. Participants are given the right of veto - 'Vigilant and assiduous use of member-checking should build confidence in individuals and groups and should lead to a pervasive judgment about the extent to which fairness exists' (p.22). Within this study a measure of member checking was possible. Each interview was deliberately planned to build on the previous data collection e.g. during Di's second interview, I revisited her written reflections in four e-journals completed during the intervening months as well as data generated in the first interview (*Table 3.3*). Secondly, the co-constructed reflection following the lesson observation served to revisit and check data generated during the lesson. The third and final interview was shaped to return to earlier data to check for change. Although participants did not have a chance to verify their data in written form, they were given many opportunities during the data collection process to ensure their messages were clearly represented. On completion of this thesis I will provide a summary document for participants.

### *Critical friends*

Two friends kindly read Chapters One - Four at a draft stage. As a retired primary teacher and a paediatric psychiatrist, neither is involved in teachers' professional development, thus perfectly positioned to comment on clarity. I received brief, but valuable feedback.

## **Data analysis and 'writing the story' of this research**

It has been a deliberate choice to bring together the above components of this 'thesis-in-progress'. Due to the constant interaction (shuttling to and fro) between data analysis and writing and their interdependency, it seems advantageous to document them as a dual process.



A 'detailed examination of the elements or structure of something, typically as the basis for discussion or interpretation,' is how the New Oxford English Dictionary defines 'analysis'. In an analysis (e.g. of a drama, a piece of music) we expect to read a description and explication of the constitutive components, enabling an examination of the various roles and the relationship between them, concluding with an evaluation. Much the same applies in analysis of qualitative research data, though Wolcott emphasises that '...analysis refers quite specifically and narrowly to systematic procedures followed in order to identify essential features and relationships' (1994, p.24). The systematic and non-linear analytical procedures guiding this study are examined in this section.

The actual *writing* of the thesis was not as systematic as analysis of the data. Writing is a personal matter and individuals approach it in diverse ways (Gibson & Brown 2009). I empathise with Bassey (1999) who observes –

I find that writing is a wonderful stimulus to thought. I am a messy writer for whom the cut and paste of word processors is a god-send...My ideas jerk rather than flow...until I start writing I am not sure to where they will lead and consequently there are many false starts and deleted chunks of text. There are also long periods of time when nothing happens and then I come back to earlier writings and find new insights (p.11).

How I have written the story of this research and reached my tentative conclusions (*Chapter Four*) is summarised here, much of it in diagrammatic form.

### **1. From data collection to NVivo storage**

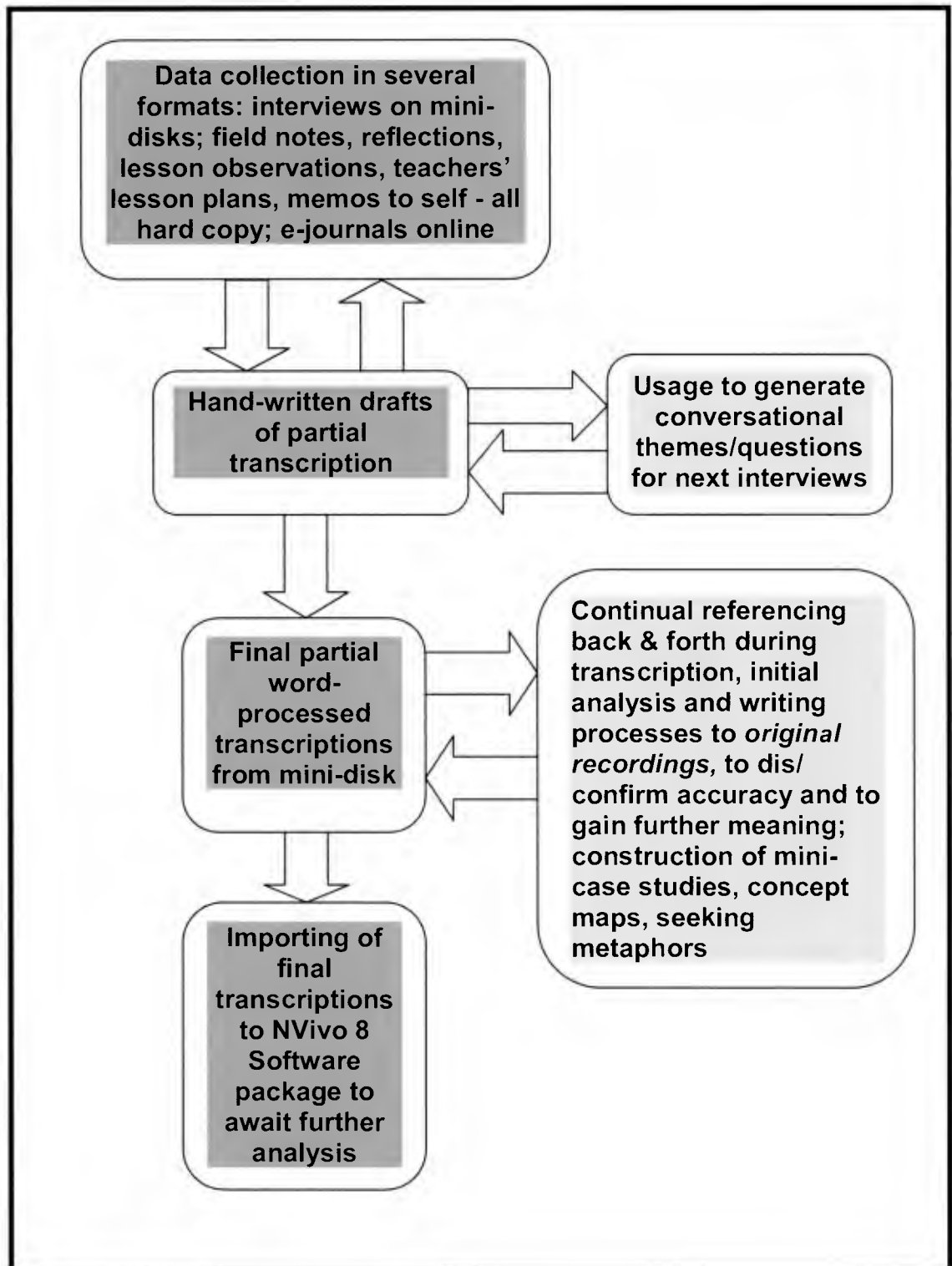
Despite being comfortable with a non-linear directionality for the writing process (see *above*), I can identify two defined periods of analytical writing which seemed to yield distinctive outcomes. *Figure 3.1* traces the journey from data collection in original audio-taped or hand-written or e-journal formats to the importing of typed transcriptions into NVivo 8 software (QSR 2008). On the way, initial data analysis, occurring as Gibbs (2007) suggests '...in the field' (p.3) was used to inform subsequent data collection. Transcription took many hours and I grew increasingly aware of its importance –

Transcription is translation and all translations are partial; the particularity in the case of research derives from the theoretical perspective of the research. Transcriptions are never value free; they are theory laden (Kress *et al.*, 2005 p.10).

Early insights were organised and presented informally through concept mapping, case studies and vignettes forming the basis for discussion with colleagues and supervisor; some were later integrated into Chapter Four. This was an early, but crucial stage of engagement with the data. These representations helped to discern and confirm what was pertinent and they drove me to return to the data to look or listen again.

For a while I resisted NVivo, resigning myself to the use of highlighters, post-its and spider diagrams to highlight, link or emphasise key points. Once the data were transcribed however, their volume compelled me to reconsider. NVivo made further analysis manageable by facilitating the recording of open and axial coding, categorisation, annotations, memos and a research diary, all in the same place and more systematically than without it.

**Figure 3.1: From data collection to storage in NVivo 8 as software project awaiting further analysis**



## 2. Analysis and draft writing

### Open coding

Further analysis followed using a grounded theory type approach, the aim of which is to 'generate a theory to explain what is central to the data (Robson 2002, p.493) – *Figure 3.2*. I began by creating open codes/free nodes with simple or conceptual descriptors, unrelated and randomly arranged - 'Coding is a process for which there are no rules, merely guidelines' states Henn *et al.*, cited in Gibson & Brown (2009, p.128). These initial codes or categories were typically non-specific e.g. *Existing theory, Motivation, Notion of expert, Parental involvement*. As coding proceeded some were refined and others not. The *Notion of expert* was evident from the beginning, although I did not at first recognise its value to this thesis.

The free nodes were labelled in different ways e.g. conceptually, as in Di's *Eclectic approach to teaching literacy* – '*Every child needs several tools in their toolbox; they need a whole armoury to go at when they're not sure. It's our job to arm children*' (D/1/3). Eva's apparent contrast of her own 'expertise' with that of the external consultant is an example of an inferential label - '*I get a better response from staff than her because they know me and they know I know what school is like. When R [consultant] comes in, it's someone from outside who they immediately feel is someone telling them what to do, which is a bit of a barrier*' (E/2/7). Other nodes received purely descriptive tags.

### Axial coding

Subsequently, as I continued to interrogate the data, categories were further refined (*Figure 3.2*) and organised around a theme or pattern (Miles & Huberman 1994). So began an iterative process of merging, refining and rejecting as theory began to develop, constantly comparing and refining criteria for inclusion, with each code accorded specific properties. I eventually left aside those that seemed to occur only infrequently relative to others (e.g. *Parental involvement*) and concentrated on those appearing to be at the core of the data. *Changed or changing cognitions, Components of CPD making an impact, Existing understandings, Expert practice and Notion of expert* represented data

with a considerable commonality and a clear connection. These became the tree nodes: the properties of *Expert practice* were delineated in this way - 'Those data associated with practice that is improving in some way as a result of CPD', while the category *Notion of expert* represents data - 'Expressing a range of thoughts and feelings including confidence and competence, but often expressed negatively as if participants don't think of themselves in these terms'. While the first category is linked with improved pedagogy, the second is associated with emotions aroused by those improvements to practice. These were quite broad themes and clearly required more penetrating analysis. Sub-themes were identified and often labelled with *in vivo* titles e.g. 'It feels scary'. Negative case evidence added to the richness, causing me to ask further questions about why they had occurred. Inclusion under one theme or category did not imply agreement or uniformity. Instead, differences or distinct features, peculiarities and contrasts were examined to explore their relevance to the research question - '...a theme provides a way of linking diverse experiences or ideas together, and of juxtaposing and interrelating different examples and features of the data' (Gibson & Brown 2009, p.129). Gradually the connections became clearer.

Figure 3.2: Grounded theory type approach to data generated during this research

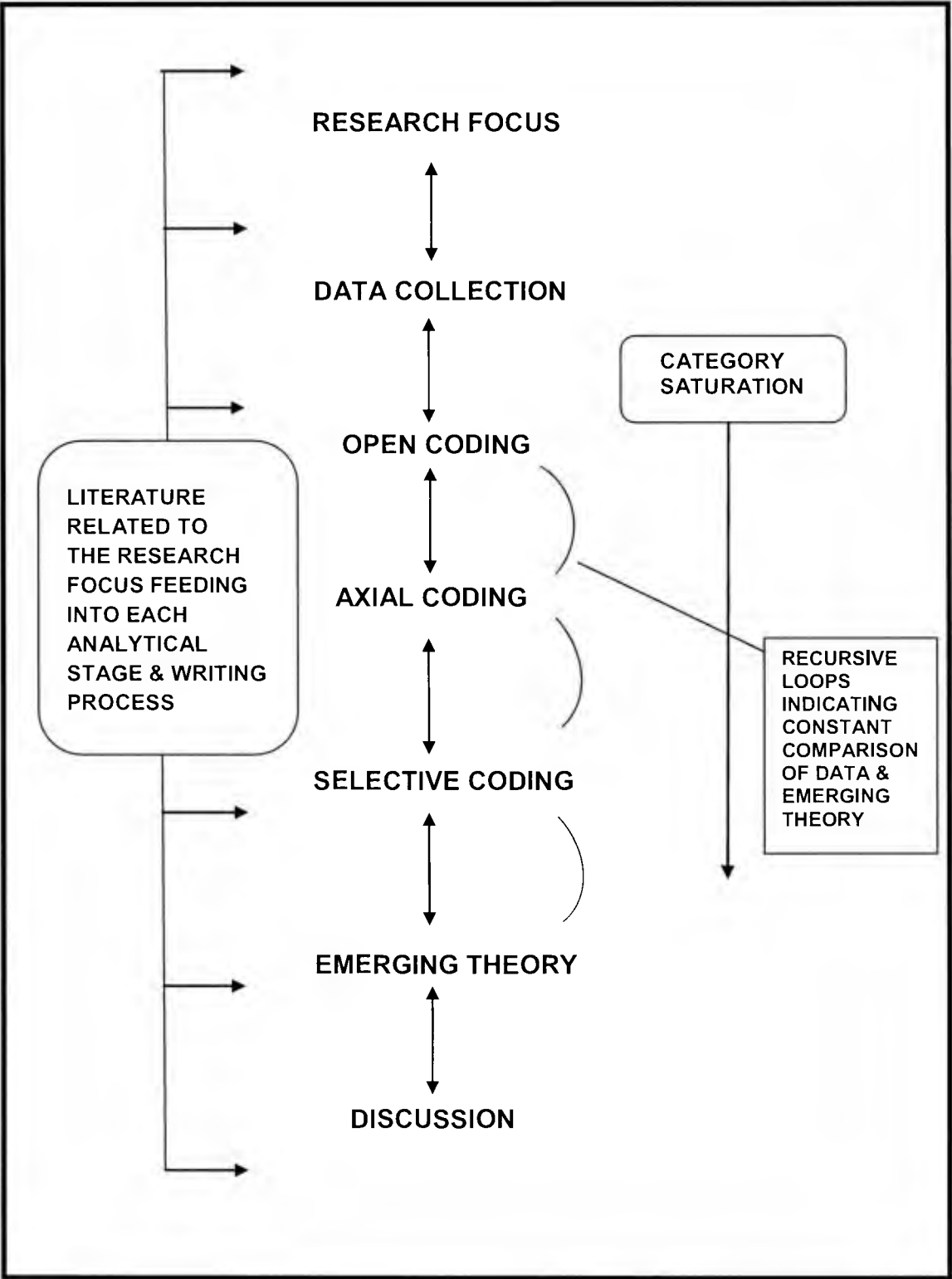


Table 3.4 shows sub-themes representing data coded at the supercode (Gibson & Brown 2009) - *Expertise/Affective domain* in arbitrary order and presented like a list in NVivo. In addition to those recorded here there were a further two sub-categories entitled *Expertise/Expert knowledge* and *Expertise/Learning*, encapsulating data coded to aspects of the expertise theme, while some data were coded at several nodes.

**Table 3.4 Data categorised at tree node *Expertise/Affective domain*/**

<b>EXPERTISE/ AFFECTIVE DOMAIN/ SUB-THEMES</b>
<i>pride in achievements</i>
<i>raised self-esteem as result of CPD</i>
<i>enjoyment of PD, of teaching following PD, of success</i>
<i>self-doubt as part of transformative process</i>
<i>expertise not recognised</i>
<i>regret due to not having expert knowledge earlier</i>
<i>ambivalence about expert role</i>
<i>'it feels good'</i>
<i>'it feels scary'</i>
<i>threat to expertise</i>
<i>self-expectation</i>
<i>'doesn't make me feel I'm wrong'</i>

### *Memoing*

I used the NVivo memo facility and also pen and paper to work through some problem, theorise or record deliberations. Entries varied according to what I was considering, but might include a discussion with self about some aspect of thematic coding, a thinking space (Gibson & Brown 2009), or simply, and especially latterly, a 'to do' list. Appendix Q presents an extract. The memo is typical of the notes written to self during the analytical stages, sometimes in a research diary, on printed data and often in NVivo.

### *Draft writing*

Simultaneous with the analytical process, drafts of Chapter Two were underway. With a background steeped in this literature it was impossible to approach the data without some sense of what might come to be seen as important. The use of predetermined categories is out of step in the grounded theory approach as presented by Glaser & Strauss (1967) and although I endeavoured to approach the data with an open mind, in practice one brings to the analytical task conscious or subconscious ideas derived from literature, life experience and linked with the research question one is seeking to address. Accordingly I have described my analytical approach as grounded theory based on epistemological assumptions, and as a method sensitive to the particular research context. My focus was on providing a 'thick description...' as Gibbs suggests (2007, p.4, citing Geertz 1973), while attempting to make the writing '... clear, engaging... [to] help[s] the reader to experience "being there". The story and findings become believable and realistic, accurately reflecting the complexities of real life' (Robson 2002, p.166).

### *Selective coding*

A central integrating theme of 'expertise' was identified (Strauss & Corbin 1998). As a result of data immersion, I believed an exploration of expertise in relation to the CPD pursued by the study's participants would serve to focus the resemblance and relationships amongst the data and help to tell the story of this research, while operating as a lens to view other data and assist in their explanation. Hence, expertise is examined as the key theme emerging in this research through a series of exemplifications in Chapter Four. However, further and deeper analysis also revealed that participants keenly felt the impact of theoretical and pedagogical change emotionally. The parallel journey of 'affect' associated with theoretical change is also reported and a tentative link between the two themes is hypothesised.



## **Ethical issues**

From the initial proposal to the collection of data, analysis and reporting, it is incumbent upon the researcher to adhere to sound ethical practices. As sole researcher in this study, I bear full responsibility for its conduct and the credibility of the account. I am familiar with the Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research provided by the British Ethical Research Association (2004) and carefully attended to key points under –

### ***Responsibilities to participants***

- Participants, being convinced of the integrity and value of this study, gave voluntary written consent prior to the research getting underway (*Appendices A & B, Confirmatory e-mail (sample) & written pledge*). They were aware that they could withdraw at any point. They understood how the data were to be used (transcription, anonymised quotation) and to whom and how they were to be reported.
- The assurance of confidentiality was to the fore at all times. Pseudonyms were used in data storage from the start and during reporting. I applied a coding system for interview and observation transcripts. All data have been kept secure.
- I recognised the need to be sensitive around the use of colleagues' time.
- I noted my position as a member of the Reading Recovery National Leadership team and the necessity for sensitivity when working with *RR* professionals.

### ***Responsibilities to the community of educational researchers***

- I have tried to ensure that the recording of data is accurate.
- In my reporting I have subjected my interpretations to critique from several angles and have aimed to present an open, fair and unbiased analysis.
- The research process and findings are open to scrutiny and validation through an electronic audit trail.

- I have aspired to conduct this research to the highest standards, thus protecting the integrity and reputation of educational research.
- The Ethics Committee of the Doctoral School approved this research before any data were collected.

## **Design and methods – a summary**

I have provided rationales for the choice of theoretical perspectives underpinning this qualitative study (interpretivism) and have explained the epistemological position I bring to the study (social constructivism). The methodology adopted is case study design and a grounded theory type approach has been taken to analyse the data, both selected to suit the nature of this naturalistic research. Data collection methods (semi-structured interviews, lesson observation with reflection and stimulated recall and e-journals) have been explained and their relative strengths and disadvantages in a study of this nature considered. Threats to the study's trustworthiness and steps taken to ensure its reliability as far as is possible have been clarified. The group of participating teachers (though they never convened as a group) has been characterised in ways commonly employed in school communities. I have attempted to demonstrate the approach taken to data analysis and to reporting. The ethical code governing the study has been explained.

The next two chapters tell the story of participants' individual journeys through eleven months of professional development. In Chapter Four, I introduce the participants through a variety of modes – by examining their changed and changing personal and professional perspectives in relation to their own learning where literacy acquisition and pedagogy are the objects of that learning, by considering their CPD goals, by illustrating how teaching expertise is modelled for them, and by exploring affect experienced in association with their professional learning. The relationship between participants' self-perceptions of expertise and the intense emotion experienced during the year is examined. In Chapter Five I consider the particular issues that interest me as a researcher and teacher-educator. This chapter also provides an opportunity to

reflect on what has been learnt through the study and to discuss the implications for those designing and leading professional development.

## CHAPTER FOUR – ‘*It’s given me kudos...*’

*‘It’s given me kudos, especially for me, as I’ve been part of the furniture for 18 years – I was feeling, there I am, one of the many staff trying to keep my head above water in a very pressured job. Now I’ve got expert knowledge, I’m sought out, they’re tapping in. It feels good, I know it’s correct, I know it’ll help the children’ (Di, final interview, transcript pages 12-13).<sup>47</sup>*

### Introduction

How, in the space of 11 months, did Di shift from the self-perception that she was ‘*part of the furniture*’ – secure, always there, but perhaps somewhat taken for granted – to a confident assertion that she had acquired ‘*expert knowledge*’ to the extent that she was ‘*sought out*’ by others? Further, what role did participants’ shifting emotional responses play in the learning process as they moved through the PD year, as in Di’s swing from her perceived lack of status to a growing self-efficacy belief?

In this chapter I tell the story of Di and the other participants by reporting, analysing and interpreting the data generated. I interweave their own words to illustrate the account, enhancing its authenticity and validity, but recognise that it remains a mediated text (Maclure 1993). I provide a body of contextualised ‘thick description’ (Geertz 1973, cited in Gibbs 2007, p.4), with analytic commentary supported by references to a relevant literature, offering readers the opportunity to make up their minds about the claims made through this study.

Following a brief introduction into the ways in which participants allude to ‘expertise’, I consider the new or transformed understandings of participants linked to aspects of their own learning (related to literacy acquisition and pedagogy) and that of their pupils. Regardless of any observable or inferred skill acquisition (since it is not within this thesis’ scope to measure this), I

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<sup>47</sup> For clarity and to call attention to participants’ voices, an italic font is used when quoting *in vivo*

demonstrate that participants appear to start their respective PD<sup>48</sup> with aspirational but pragmatic goals. These are pursued throughout the year with tenacity despite setbacks and dilemmas, the development as literacy teachers supported mainly by reciprocal relationships between theory and practice and bridged by nurturing a habit of critical reflection. I adopt a framework from critical incident theory (Cunningham 2008) through which I examine how participants' understandings alter as a result of an identifiable event, sequence of events or process, using this framework as a lens to gain extra insight from their explanations.

A single extended vignette provides a means of closely examining one participant's evolving perspectives as she seeks to reconcile existing beliefs with what is new to her. By presenting comprehensive data through which her narrative is traced, the reader is able to further determine the grounded-ness and trustworthiness of my interpretations.

Next I examine and theorise around the 'expert modelling' extended to participants by PD leaders and consultants during the year, noting how they nurtured embryonic expertise through careful scaffolding and small group support. Participants' views on CPD leadership, about which elements seem most meaningful, and about how CPD impacts on their belief systems are presented in short interrelated sections. Ways in which participants' *self*-perceptions relating to expertise have been affected through engagement with CPD are explored. Overall, increased self-efficacy beliefs emerge, perhaps associated with encouragement to expert performance fostered during the year.<sup>49</sup>

As participants journey through the eleven months they experience a gamut of competing emotions which are related in some way to new learning or the manner of acquiring it - pride, joy, confidence, regret, apprehension, ambivalence, resistance, disappointment, surprise and disbelief... This study emphasises that PD leaders should be alert and attentive to the experience and

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<sup>48</sup> Eva, Leila & Heather followed CPD in SSP; Di, Linda, Kate, Kalvinder & Peter followed RR/IPD

<sup>49</sup> It is not the purpose here to evaluate the impact of the PD experienced by considering the achievement of pupils taught during the period of this study, nor is it the intention to appraise participants' developing expertise according to any scale or stage mechanism.

expression of strong emotion as they engage with teachers' advanced learning. Since learning and emotion – as affective reaction or experience – are so closely intertwined (Hascher 2010), my intention is to integrate this theme within the preceding sections where appropriate, clearly contextualising the specific incidents in which affect plays a part, drawing attention to them, and considering their implications.

## **A role for expertise in advanced professional learning focused on literacy teaching and learning**

### ***Recognising expertise in others***

In this study expertise emerges as a central theme, appearing in numerous guises. Some references are clearly articulated e.g. exemplars of expert modelling, learning goals as vehicles for honing expertise, aspirations to excellent classroom practice. Through them, facets of a concept of expertise, as understood by participants, can be deduced e.g. Di's characterisation of her PD leader – '*She models and I do the same...she commands respect; she knows...*' (D/3/12)<sup>50</sup> seems to refer to the PD leader's knowledge and experience, in addition to the skill of being able to communicate that knowledge sensitively. This admiration for a 'more capable other' (Tharp & Gallimore 1988), is juxtaposed with Di's emergent *self*-assertion and pride that she too is becoming someone with '*expert knowledge*' (D/3/12), from whom others can draw. She seems to enjoy her new prominence in school. However, it is also a possible indicator of a danger residing within this novice-expert relationship – that of over-dependency, or failure to believe in the possibility of cultivating similar skills oneself, or developing as a critical thinker. It is a relationship that needs to be scaffolded and nurtured sensitively. Di's view of knowledge is foregrounded here too - she has now 'got' it (*see Chapter heading*). How did she acquire it? Is her terminology simply a manner of speaking or does her stance prohibit the further growth of knowledge?

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<sup>50</sup> D/3/12 indicates the quotation is from Di, during her third interview and is to be found on transcript pages 12-13; see *Participants' pseudonyms and coding key*

### ***'Expert' labelling and self-doubt***

Linda also experiences recognition as a literacy expert, but reacts quite differently: in school she is introduced to anxious parents as - *'...our very special reading expert, God!'* (Li/3/12), a label she accepts only reluctantly – *'I do some running records and am expected to feed back ... It makes me feel, em...slightly uncomfortable really'* (Li/3/12). The pragmatic move by SMT to raise the status of their resident expert leaves Linda ambivalent about her new responsibility. Her candid reflection on the need for continued professional input - *'The more you do it, the more you realise you're very ignorant'* (Li/2/6), seems to reveal a growing awareness of what she does not know. Or perhaps it is Linda's appreciation of the irony – *'that the children are teaching us; we are driven by them in many ways...'* (Li/3/12), that makes her apprehensive of the 'expert' accolade? For Linda too, expertise appears to be associated with possessing superior knowledge, a feature she does not recognise in herself. The keenly felt teacher-learner tension has potential for either constructive or negative outcomes. Although Di and Linda travel on similar professional journeys, their responses to others' perceptions of the professional change occurring within them contrast markedly.

### ***Continual learning as teachers***

Other conceptions of expertise are expressed less explicitly or are buried more deeply. A key sentiment articulated by each participant (including Di on other occasions) and implied throughout the data is that continual professional learning is a requirement for effective practice in schools, not merely as a response to imposed or predictable change, but as integral to engagement as an educator. This is well illustrated in the articulation of participants' learning goals (p.108) and in Heather's assertion - *'As teachers we're learning all the time'* (H/2/7).

Although for Heather and Eva the specific approach to literacy learning and subject knowledge is not new, their PD serves to convince them of the efficacy of their pedagogical approach. Heather's affirmation – *'I feel very secure in all I do'* (H/2/11) seems to imply personal and professional satisfaction with her current knowledge and practice. It is due to an aptitude for SSP teaching that

Heather is being coached for AST status, itself an indicator of excellent practice. For Heather, expertise is not merely about being knowledgeable; it is strongly associated with classroom practice.

However, the PD routes Heather and Eva pursue lead them to new and challenging discoveries about the nature of *adult* learning. Heather contrasts her personal attitude with those of others – *‘I try to put in 110%, but have met teachers who don’t like change ...’* (H/1/6). Eva is surprised that adults sometimes opt out of further learning – *‘I thought everyone wanted to be in the same place’* (E/3/13). She has encountered – *‘...teachers who are happy as they are, teachers [who] make personal decisions about whether to re-start learning or to continue resisting. It’s – “I haven’t got time to think about it,” or – “So much change,” or – “So much to think about,” or – “Nothing ever stands still,” or – “I did it 20 years ago”’* (E/2/6). These attitudinal comments that Eva construes as justifications to ignore fresh challenge may be representative of a degree of cynicism within the teaching profession. They diverge markedly from the meaningful learning objectives of the research participants who have already opted into professional change, and defy the argument that continuous learning is eagerly anticipated by all teaching professionals. Leading the PD of teachers whose viewpoints contradict their own confronts Eva and Heather with unexpected and perplexing personal and professional challenge.

### ***Working definition of an ‘expert’***

In Chapter Two I examined how ‘expertise’ is understood – noting the characteristic features of consistency of high achievement, wise judgement and extensive knowledge in a specific field. I reported that a number of prototypic characteristics linked with expert classroom performance have been identified<sup>51</sup> so that teaching expertise might be exemplified during ITE and anticipated earlier in teachers’ careers. I concluded my search for descriptors by reiterating Fook *et al*’s characterisation of expertise as ‘more a description of a type of practice, rather than necessarily a successive level [or stage] of achievement’

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<sup>51</sup> Many characteristics have been identified and used in studies (e.g. see Appendix O), but a definitive list of attributes remains elusive (HCEC 2012)



(2000 p.185). I cited research presented in Hanushek & Rivkin (2006) and the McKinsey Report (2007) establishing causal relationships between expert teachers and pupils' academic attainment. Taking account of those and other findings, a recently passed Education Bill (DFE 2011) underlines the significance of expert teacher performance, reiterating the connection with improved results. Consequently Ofsted (2011-12) has refocused school inspections to address the quality of teaching and learning in all areas and specifically the teaching of reading.

In this reporting context and as a frame of reference, I propose a working definition of an 'expert' – 'A reflective and widely experienced professional who continually critiques and updates her<sup>52</sup> knowledge in the specialist field. She demonstrates a consistently high standard and facility of performance and manner in novel problem-solving situations, such that her colleagues respect and value her achievements. Thus, learners, both adults and children, are enabled to reach their potential when under her guidance'. There is no sense here of being 'perfect' on every, or indeed any occasion, but instead an unmistakable expectation of a continuous learning path.

## **Participants' changed and changing personal and professional theories**

Professional development is frequently embedded in whole school or large-scale reform aimed at enriching or transforming an aspect of scholastic endeavour, often basic skills (Fullan *et al.*, 2006). Both the strategic literacy intervention *Every Child a Reader (ECaR)* and systematic, synthetic phonics (SSP) programmes<sup>53</sup> are considered here as large-scale innovations emanating from government policy and necessitating renewed or transformed perspectives for successful implementation. In order to impact in sufficient depth to be sustained over time, it is crucial to ground and extend teachers' understandings so they know how the programmes work theoretically and function practically to

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<sup>52</sup> Seven of the eight participants are women. With apologies to 'Peter' I have used the feminine pronoun where applicable throughout

<sup>53</sup> E.g. Letters and sounds (2007)

progress or accelerate children's literacy learning (Fullan 2001; Earl *et al.*, 2003).

The theme of improving or transforming professional practice and developing expertise through the mediation of CPD is central to the data generated through this study. Each participant was invited to talk about CPD goals during initial data gathering, though these may have changed several times during the study period. Participants' expressed aims are important not least because one measure of satisfaction is the extent to which these are realised or positively re-shaped through the CPD. Maintaining high motivational levels by addressing expressed needs inevitably influences the willingness and capacity to learn, sustain learning and change (Brookfield 1986; Bandura 2001), while a positive reaction is regarded as essential to the learning process (Guskey 2005).

### ***Participants' learning goals reflect diversity of CPD benefits***

In this section, I examine the range of participants' learning objectives (*Figure 4.1*); they seem to mirror the diversity of motives and perceived benefits in Pedder *et al.*, (2008). The specific foci selected by the study's participants are –

- improvement in children's learning
- continued professional learning
- growth in theoretical understanding about literacy
- preparation for career advancement.

### ***Impact on pupils as a CPD outcome***

It might be surmised that a positive impact on pupil learning as an outcome of intensive CPD would be of central interest to teachers (Pedder *et al.*, 2008). This stance is reflected in the goals of two participants and can perhaps be assumed in others. Eva and Kalvinder are principally concerned with pedagogy and pupil progress and improving their schools' provision especially for those with impoverished oral language often associated with literacy difficulties (Bercow 2008; Tickell 2011). Pedder *et al.*, (2008) found that teachers with leadership responsibility often develop broader reasons for CPD participation

i.e. they are thinking of whole school benefits. Eva (LITCo) is concerned for pupils on a nearby estate – *‘You really need literacy to access everything else, so that’s why we’ve put so much emphasis and money into this phonics programme...’* (E/1/2), while Kalvinder (SEnCo) stresses her eclectic approach to literacy acquisition – *‘Every child matters...Success comes from tailoring the programmes...SSP doesn’t suit all, I haven’t seen one thing that works for all’* (Ka/1/4).

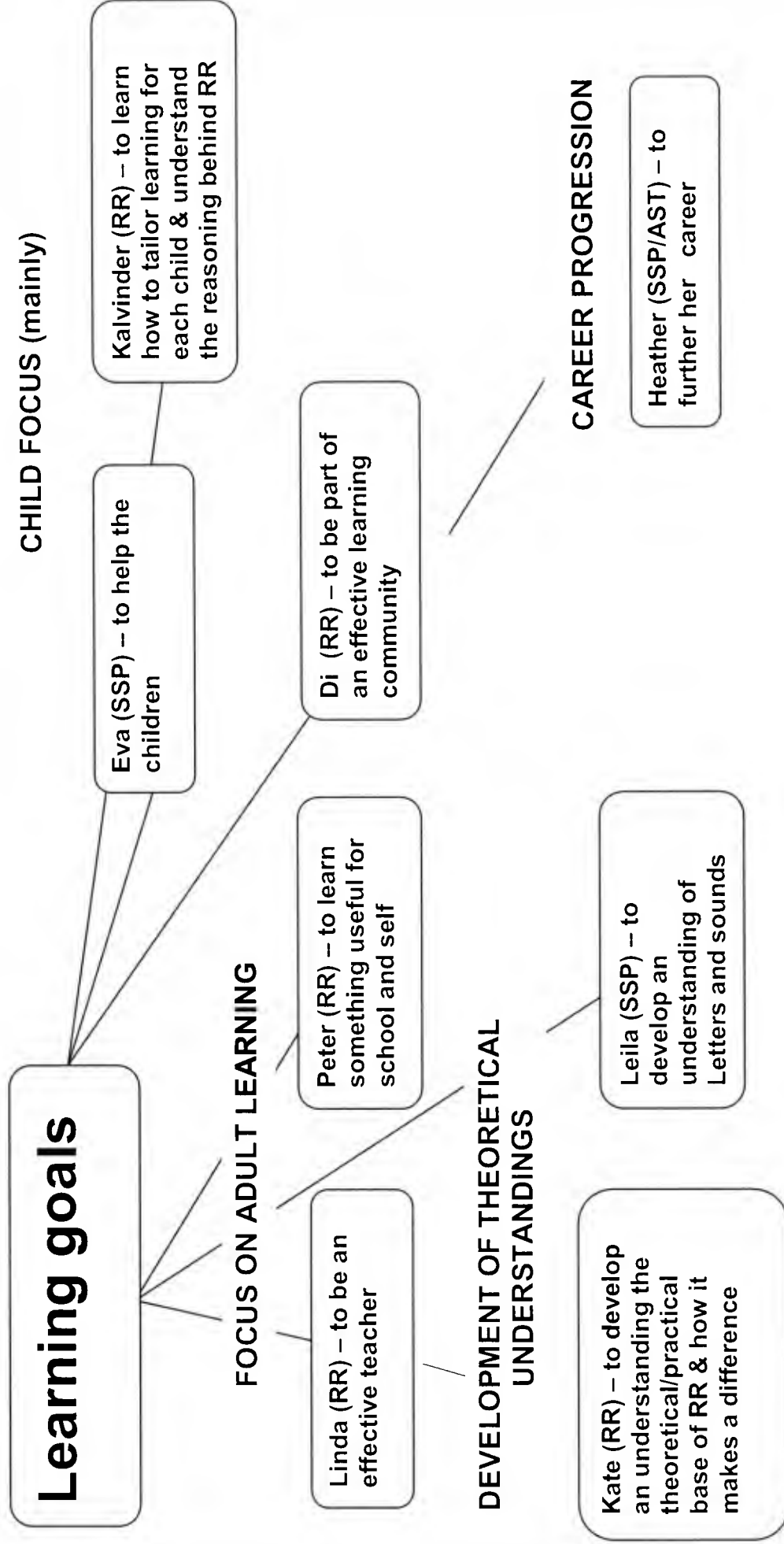
#### *CPD for teacher effectiveness*

For Linda, Peter and Di, their continued learning as professionals working in demanding roles is imperative. Interestingly these are the part-time teachers in the participant group to whom CPD is rarely offered, and their entitlement appears to have been neglected. Their objectives are not self-serving, but realistic in their professional contexts. The tendency to view the benefits of CPD engagement in terms of individual fulfilment more than for collective or collaborative reasons is common (*ibid.*). Linda is a practical person who wishes to be – *‘an effective RR teacher’* (Li/1/3), while Peter hopes – *‘it will be of use to me and school, to go back and use the examples’* (P/1/3). A desire to develop good practice in a technical sense seems to underlie Peter’s ‘usefulness’ terminology and drives him forward. He has failed once in his teaching career and is impatient to practise all he learns and test its value (Landry *et al.*, 2009). Di desires to be part of a community of learners and wants to – *‘[share] experiences with contemporaries, knowing advice and help is on hand’* (D/1/3).

#### *CPD promoting teachers’ understanding*

Kate and Leila present as deep thinking participants, slow to accept new concepts until they make sense to them and are proven to work with pupils (Garet *et al.*, 2001). Kate recognises that – *‘Although we have guidelines within which to structure and plan our teaching there still needs to be an understanding of the pedagogy in order for it to be delivered well’* (Kt/EJ2/9). Similarly Leila desires – *‘...a better understanding of ‘Letters and sounds’”* (Le/1/4).

Figure 4.1: Each participant's declared learning goals at the study's outset



### *CPD as a means of career development*

Lastly, Heather's ambition to become an AST specialising in the teaching of phonics provides an incentive for advanced learning. Use of further accreditation as a tool for career development is normally found in less experienced colleagues keen for preferment, but in Heather's case it reflects her commitment to the *SSP* method and eagerness to extend its use.

Although diverse in nature, the declared objectives signify serious intent among the participant group - a desire to enhance their knowledge in the field of literacy teaching and learning. To what extent their goals are sharpened through their articulation cannot be known; it is also possible that the impact of CPD is increased as a result of engagement in this study with its stress on critical reflection.

In one respect the participants are unusual: no one indicates that she would rather not participate or that she has been compelled to attend. Rather, each seems highly motivated to engage, learn and develop her expertise – an occurrence requiring some explanation. The participant sample was derived from a far larger group of teachers involved in CPD (*SSP*, *ECaR*) in LAs throughout England during 2008-9. They would have been recruited in the normal way through response to course promotion. However, participants *in this study*, already recruited for CPD, were recommended by personal, professional contacts in several LAs. It is probable that to ensure a useful contribution to my study, the teachers selected were amongst the most willing participants in either PD route. Thus, deliberate but well-meant actions influencing selection may have reduced the trustworthiness of this study.

With CPD lasting almost a year, there was ample time to progress participants' learning goals in a range of contexts, and for theoretical input or specific incidents to impact in positive or constructive ways. The literature of transformative learning theory in relation to adult learners (e.g. Mezirow 1991; Cranton 2002; Mezirow *et al.*, 2009), offers insight into how experience is absorbed and interpreted, sometimes leading to powerful, transformed understandings. Cunningham's (2008) critical incident framework provides an

approach to considering exemplars from this study's data, to support an understanding of what happened to participants during CPD.

### ***Critical incidents as turning points in understanding***

Critical incidents (or 'significant events' in the medical field) are described as having 'the potential to dramatically accelerate professional learning' (*ibid.* p.161). Despite its capacity for influence, the single event (or process occurring over time) 'may...appear wholly banal or trivial' to a spectator or reader, but yet 'create a disturbance in [our] professional equilibrium' (*ibid.* p.164-5). A working definition is proposed –

A critical incident comprises an event in professional life that creates a significant disturbance of our understanding of important principles or of effective practice...which following a period of focused reflection will be experienced as a turning point (p.166).

The relevance of this theory to teacher-educators and their students is clear. It reflects Mezirow's hypothesis that often as part of a process leading to transformed meaning perspectives, the adult learner may experience some sort of a 'disorientating dilemma' (1991, p. xvi) as part of a longer process of change. In a number of instances this study's participants seem to frame their learning in terms of critical incident, although they themselves do not characterise the events as such. The stories that follow are representative of their real life accounts and of how they make sense of them. Extended data give readers the opportunity to engage in greater proximity with participants' reflections.

#### ***(a) Teachers' expectations influence pupils' achievement***

Teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement have been shown to have an effect on their level of success (Lyons 2003). The report '*Removing barriers to literacy*' (Ofsted 2011) suggests that 'teachers with high expectations for pupils' achievements in literacy' (p. 2) can positively affect the attainment of those at most risk of not gaining basic skills. If this is true for classroom teachers, the expectations of intervention teachers might also be assumed to shape teaching decisions affecting progress, perhaps more so.

Di has worked in the same school for 18 years. Over time she has established acquaintances with entire families, often finding herself teaching the children of previous pupils. One such is Joanne whose father required a Statement of Special Educational Need. Joanne is a quiet child; her class teachers consider her to be deprived of opportunities to develop her expressive language at home, now impeding reading progress. Di speaks of her often during interviews and within her *RR/IPD* group, her community of learners. The breakthrough in Joanne's progress seemed to occur in January when Di writes – *'One pupil had to read, "Let's see it". I could see her quietly mouthing "L-e-t-s", then actually putting it together in one lovely phrased sentence. It was wonderful to watch her ...get to this point; she was processing the build part and was comfortable with the other common words. Then, she took it to phrasing,'* (D/EJ6/9).

Reflecting on that incident, Di admits - *'I never classed children as non-readers, but now I think there is no such thing'* (D/2/6). *'This ...has been a real eye opener...Joanne's background prejudiced me. It shouldn't have...'* (D/LO/10). From her tone, I suggest that Di's fresh awareness that Joanne might have been hindered by low teacher expectations is a powerful experience eliciting a turning point in her attitude. The realisation that she had misjudged Joanne's capacity to learn seems analogous to the significant disturbance of which Cunningham writes. It may also have triggered feelings of guilt in Di for other pupils similarly regarded, or regret for the habituation of a mistaken outlook (Hargreaves 1994). The learning here is not solely concerned with Di's attitude to one child; it is rather about the development of an attitude or disposition (Loucks-Horsley 1996), open to considering a child's strengths and the potential of a personalised intervention to overcome her difficulties. It is perhaps not the form of learning that Di expected, more like *'...a flashbulb, [revealing] the major choice and change times in people's lives'* (Sikes *et al.*, cited in Hargreaves 2005, p.970). She is now prepared to be *'surprised'* (Clay 2005) and pupils *'are enabled to reach their potential under her guidance'* (p. 104).

*(b) Critical reflection empowers practice*

Teachers are said to achieve competence, not so much as a result of experience, but more as a result of reflecting on experience and drawing on informed stances (Berliner 1988). I relate Linda's story to illustrate the power of critical reflection that she regards as supporting her to question, not to take things at '*face value*' (Li/3/11) and to hone her teaching skills (Cranton 1996).

Linda believes that '*[Literacy] can't just happen by osmosis*' (Li/1/2). In her view it is important for pupils to learn a range of strategies to assist them in problem-solving situations. She judges that *Reading Recovery's* success is due to the individual nature of the teaching, designed at the pupil's cutting edge, with over-learning as required. Her planning is thus more detailed than in class - '*I need to keep on top of what the child is doing and give them the next bit*' (Li/2/5). She finds the PD leader's voice becoming her 'inner voice' (Dadds 1997) prompting her to consider teaching decisions that will achieve the '*biggest impact*' (Li/2/5). It is in this area of contingent teaching that the critical incident occurs.

In the lesson observation, Linda taught Curtis who was near the end of his *RR* programme. She was concerned that he had not developed effective strategies to decode unknown words independently. She doubted that she had chosen the '*right*' books or used appropriate prompts to assist him contingently. Whilst reading Curtis made many errors, some self-corrected. Analysis shows he tended to use only initial letters to problem-solve - (ago/a, picked/put<sup>54</sup>). Regarding substitutions, sentence structure was respected (came/called) and meaning often connected (fridge/food, sailors/sea). Further visual or semantic cues were called upon to cross-check at mismatch. Asked how he had read 'river,' Curtis revealed an inadequate strategy - '*It begins with (r) and ends with (r)*' (Li/LO/9). Curtis was not yet using sufficient visual information to satisfactorily inform a first reading (*Appendices G & H*).

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<sup>54</sup> The first word is the word in text; the next is Curtis' attempt



During the co-constructed stimulated recall we considered Curtis' difficulties and how his progress could be advanced. Linda was a prolific 'e-journaler' and soon after the lesson, she wrote with reference to Curtis– *'I have been guilty of feeding too much to the child in the new text. I am trying to not do this quite so much [but] this is very hard!'* (Li/EJ5/10). The extract seems to convey a modification to the nature and amount of her support for Curtis.

Some weeks later Linda was able to convert her 'guilt' to more constructive use - *'What I have learnt from teaching my first cohort of children, I am trying address with this next group'* (Li/EJ6/10). Linda revealed how practitioner reflection had helped her - *'We [Linda and a colleague] talked about keeping flexible; you have the structure, a routine for children, but you do have to think on your feet as something may not be going well, or you pick up on something that you thought was secure. I think this was the problem [with Curtis]. I was a little blinkered and I'd plough on ahead, whereas now I'm learning to step back a bit more ... and be a little bit more reflective... The whole course has (hesitates) deepened my understanding, made me perhaps more critical. I'm not accepting the first response; you wrestle; it pre-occupies your brain and you're always trying your best to improve'* (Li/3/11).

There is much in these data about Linda's learning about teaching, specifically teaching for pupils' independence. However, it is the value of stepping back and taking stock to which I wish to draw attention, clarified here by Bandura (2001) -

The metacognitive capability to reflect upon oneself and the adequacy of one's thoughts and actions is another distinctly core human feature of agency. Through reflective self-consciousness, people evaluate their motivation, values, and the meaning of their life pursuits. It is at this higher level of self-reflectiveness that individuals address conflicts in motivational inducements and choose to act in favor of one over another (p.10).

Linda, whose narrative demonstrates double-loop learning (Argyris 1991) acknowledges – *'I question things more now. I don't take things at face value. Curtis was classic, I thought he was accelerating, going OK...but when he hit book level 16 I really did start to question his security on a number of early*

*skills...This term I'm making my damnedest sure that things don't slip through'* (Li/3/11). Her capacity to choose to act in certain ways, to do her 'damnedest' to ensure things 'don't slip through' are examples of the power of 'self-reflectiveness' of which Bandura writes, and demonstrate increasing effectiveness which was her PD goal.

Although there exists a technical aspect to Linda's learning e.g. ensuring the pupil's basic skills are secure, digging deep and nurturing of habits of self-reflection contribute to developing expertise - 'to be real experts... practitioners need to be critically reflective, in order that they can fully integrate the multiple aspects of expertise' (Yielder 2004, p.65).

*(c) Working with adult learners challenges educators' assumptions*

Heather's story highlights the difficulties of initiating change in schools where teachers' thinking and practice are affected directly. Her 'significant disturbance' is rooted in encounters with those who do not share her vision, or who may be involuntary participants. It demonstrates how Heather must come to terms with disappointment and develop the art of compromise.

Heather has already mastered the skill of teaching SSP in engaging, creative ways. Her new challenge is to convince others to adopt similar pedagogy. The first indication that things are not going well is recorded in an e-journal. As quoted earlier, she writes '*I try to put in 110%, but I've met teachers who don't like change*' (H/EJ1/6). The nature of their negativity is - '*...more about logistics and not wishing to make an effort*' (H/2/7) than SSP itself. Confirmation that Heather has received a knockback is in her need to check NS documents online to support her arguments. She receives a - '*crib sheet from the CLL consultant to help answer questions*' (H/2/7) and is coached in techniques to aid responses to indifferent or reluctant teacher-learners e.g. reflecting questions back to the questioner.

Asked about what she is learning, Heather sounds aggrieved as she works through the issue – '*My problem is this, I have my own way of doing phonics*

*...I kind of feel that my way is the right way...I feel that the children going off to the tables<sup>55</sup> is very important, whereas other teachers... will say that they'll do it at some other time in the day.... But it's my view that it's linked and the children are focused...I visit them [teachers] and say to S<sup>56</sup> – “They did this, but is that OK?” I need reassurance ....for example they use a computer programme, or uncover phonemes at random, they select children who shout out... I haven't observed an awful lot of lessons.... When I observe other colleagues here, they do it my way now...so it's not so much of an issue. Other schools are completely different. I suggested to a teacher that she might do it a different way... Over time, with experience, that'll come easier...’ (H/3/9).*

To be an expert (or an AST) Heather is required to sift and sort the salient aspects of classroom practice, ignoring features that are merely personal preferences and thus dispensable. It seems difficult for her to accept others' standards and routines and she acknowledges her tendency to 'perfectionism'. By the end of the year, she is learning to compromise, while retaining an integrity and focus on essentials - *'How do you mentor? Be persistent, but diplomatic'* (H/3/11). Heather's response to her own question (above), perhaps as an outcome of collaborative analysis and reflection with her consultant, may help to nurture the 'expert within' (Dadds 1997). However, the repeated articulation of rationales justifying her preferred pedagogy seems to indicate that acceptance is incomplete. Her self-dissatisfaction is clear. Her career path thus far, restricted to one school, does not seem to have supported her well for the substantive post she now desires. Breadth of experience is a principal contributor to shifting practitioners from proficiency to expertise (Dreyfus 2004).

Each of these three participants acknowledges deep change to attitudes, theory, practice or beliefs. It seems likely that the PD has taken them into deeper waters than anticipated, apparent in emotions expressed or implied –

- Di – recognition of prejudice, guilt, regret and pleasure

<sup>55</sup> The 'tables' are for 'child-initiated activities' to consolidate earlier phonic learning

<sup>56</sup> S – Heather's CLL Consultant

- Linda – doubt, regret, acceptance, perseverance, and satisfaction
- Heather – disappointment in self and others, frustration and gradual acceptance.

Critical reflection is depicted as -

...the means by which we work through beliefs and assumptions, assessing their validity in the light of new experiences or knowledge...It helps to talk to others, exchanging opinions and ideas, receiving support and encouragement, and engaging in discourse where alternatives are seriously weighed and evidence brought forth (Cranton 2002, p.65).

While the incidents themselves may not have been sufficient to accelerate their learning, in the context of ongoing professional dialogue with PD leaders or PLCs, each participant could make sense of her experience by examining 'the values and practices that have been thrown into prominence' (Cunningham 2008, p.174), with the possibility of transformed understandings as a result.

These stories are snapshots, small incidents reflecting the unique, but overlapping contours of professional development for these experienced practitioners. An extended vignette in which only one participant, Kate, plays a part, permits deeper inquiry into how fresh theoretical insights about literacy acquisition are integrated and sticking points are worked through, as she moves through the CPD period. I have selected Kate from the participant group to tell her story. Her perspectives and intense interest in the - *'nitty gritty of learning to read'* (Kt/1/2) seem to embrace the wider picture across the group, notwithstanding their individual differences. The account records her grappling with competing theories around the primacy of cueing sources during teacher-child interactions at points of difficulty, with an eventual reconciliation of pedagogies. During 2008-9 and since, the primacy of information sources<sup>57</sup> became a relatively contentious pedagogical issue

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<sup>57</sup> While reading continuous text a reader may refer to meaning, syntax or visual information (including phonics) to problem-solve a word; since Rose (2006) teachers have been encouraged to direct pupils first to visual information

amongst policy-makers, reflected in classroom instruction in its varying forms.

***Kate: teachers' imperative to understand***

Kate is not exceptional in her willingness to articulate doubts and concerns arising from the CPD input, though due to her immediate background as a LITCo in a previous school, she is perhaps better informed about current trends in literacy pedagogy and policy than some others in the participant group. One facet of her experience is unique however: she is the only participant to have been trained in and practised both *SSP* and *RR*. By tracing her thoughts throughout the period, I aim to demonstrate the types of theoretical issues surfacing through the CPD and how she deals with them. Owing to the close theory-practice links espoused by the *RR/IPD* in which she is engaged and due to her daily teaching role, theory cannot remain as such; rather, what she believes e.g. about how best to prompt a pupil in a problem-solving situation, is enacted and reiterated in everyday pedagogical applications. By selecting Kate's data for closer scrutiny, I do not mean to imply that others' viewpoints are less important; others shared similar dilemmas.

Here I trace Kate's attempts to grapple with the theory underlying the literacy pedagogy with which she is newly presented and her efforts to reconcile and/or integrate them with current standpoints. The shift in her views is gradual. Data educed from conversations with Kate indicate that her self-confessed optimum learning style benefits from focused activity resulting in changing beliefs, practice modification and consolidation of altered understandings...in a cycle. More than once she realises her statements are contradictory.

*a) 'I want to understand it on a theoretical basis...' (Kt/1/7)*

There is disagreement about the sequence of teacher change where modifications of belief and practice with resultant improvement in pupils are the desired outcomes of teachers' PD. Desimone (2009) considers that

altered beliefs lead to practice change and progress in pupils, whereas modified teacher attitudes and beliefs occurring *as the result* of the evidence of pupils' enhanced learning is Guskey's hypothesis (2002). However, it is pointed out by Opfer *et al.*, (2011) that this confusion only 'arises because researchers have, in the first instance, considered change to be a linear process' (p.446). These authors cite Huberman's (1995) hypothesis of cyclical teacher learning, in which beliefs, practice and pupil progress are reciprocally linked and each contingent on the other. While this theory makes for messy learning from a researcher's viewpoint, it also seems more authentic. According to Richardson *et al.*, (1991) apparent contradictions within the teacher-learner in professional learning contexts can be understood as positive indicators of changing beliefs.

Kate presents as a serious-minded teacher who appreciates the 'hands-on' approach interweaving with theory (Darling-Hammond 2009) adopted on *RR/IPD* and the ways in which course content and pedagogy '*marry up*' (Kt/2/10). Being free to ask questions about rationales at the one-way screen<sup>58</sup> or in a small group allows her to - '*understand it on a theoretical basis*' (Kt/1/7). Although it may have been startling at first to be advised - '*You think about it, go back to the theory and try it out*' (Kt/3/18), the combined theory-practice methodology found to produce a strong sense of efficacy (Garet *et al.*, 2001) suits Kate, who thinks her questioning stance has been unpopular in the past. She enjoys tussling with theory - '*I see it, have a go at it, talk to others about it, a combination; I have to understand before I go away and do it*' (Kt/1/7), demonstrating an apparent need to comprehend at some level first (Desimone 2009). She confirms - '*I believe that it always was, and still is, teachers' understanding of the processes of reading and writing that has the biggest impact on how well children are taught*' (Kt/EJ2/9).

Kate's strong belief in the importance of teachers' understanding to forge and sustain innovative practice which impacts positively on children's learning is well corroborated (e.g. Roskos & Bain 1998), and articulated so compellingly

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<sup>58</sup> Appendix I

that it is likely to have influenced most aspects of her CPD experience – ‘*I need two things: I want to understand it [RR] on a theoretical basis ...and how it's going to work in the classroom for me*’ (Kt/1/7). In this she reflects the dual purposes of CPD explicated in Chapter Two (*Figure 2.1*): it is intended for *both* teacher *and* pupil learners, but improved pupil standards are not attainable without educating teacher’s advanced understandings.

b) ‘*The children themselves are a challenge to your theory*’ (Kt/3/17)

Initially the *RR/IPD* seems to support and extend Kate’s current knowledge, rather than presenting new theories for consideration. Later, she describes it as challenging, pleasurable and beneficial – ‘*I’d got to the point that I wasn’t being challenged or scared and for me, I need that in terms of self-esteem, ‘cos I have learnt an awful lot...*’ (Kt/3/20). It seems possible that Kate needs to defend her sense of efficacy – ‘*I wasn’t being challenged*’ – but over time the intellectual stimulation gently eases her out of denial – ‘*I need that...*’ and a more complex sentiment ‘*...the [self]-questioning develops...you go through all this, “Should I be doing that?” and feeling insecure*’ (Kt/3/18). The challenge to assumptions articulated here can be a precursor of transformative learning, and seems also to indicate a loss of confidence in prior abilities. This apparent incongruity may be viewed merely as an outcome of accumulated time on the course, or as representing a more open stance to new learning, to the research process or the researcher herself.

Examination of how much is ‘at stake’ for teachers who are involved in educational innovation, is insightful (Kelchtermans 2005). For Kate to admit to challenge at an earlier point may have been too much of a loss of professional pride. Her general level of confidence seems to confirm this. Since ‘*challenge*’ is acknowledged near the end of the PD period, it is also possible that it conveys release from anxiety, which if not entirely resolved, is at least expressed. Almost a year of engagement with interlinking theory, practice and critical reflection provides sufficient opportunity for renewed or deepening understanding. Referring to adult learning Berry claims that – ‘Through reflection, a deeper understanding of the self – including how one

acts, what one knows and does not know, strengths and weaknesses and gaps in between what one says and does – can be developed’ (2009, p.308). Paradoxically it is not from pupils who have made the greatest progress that Kate claims to have learnt the most (Guskey 2002), but through those who experience the most intransigent problems - *‘the children themselves are a challenge to your theory’* (Kt/3/17).

c) *‘... in education we tend to throw the baby out with the bathwater a lot of the time...’* (Kt/2/10)

Kate’s specific intellectual challenge relates to the prevailing practice of teaching children through SSP (Appendix K). She acknowledges *‘They [children] need the mechanics to learn to read’* (Kt/1/1), but she has two concerns. The first is the overuse of phonics in the early reading context - *‘What I’m seeing is that they’re sounding out absolutely everything...even the average children...That may...sort itself out ... it’s not long enough...and I’m limited in what I’ve seen... but they weren’t sounding out as well then [pre-SSP] as they are now, so somewhere we need to match the two...’* (Kt/1/4). The suggested overuse of phonic decoding hinders the progress of some children who tend to generalise every rule and can impede comprehension. Kate is challenged to re-think her attitudes because she is impressed by SSP and disturbed by this side effect manifested in pupils she is teaching.

Her second quandary is also related to SSP pedagogy and concerns the primacy of teacher prompts at pupils’ point of difficulty – *‘You have to get them to a particular point and there’s a prescribed route allegedly to go through to get them there and for most children that [prompts to visual information] obviously works. For whatever reason it hasn’t worked for the RR children...they’re not good at phonics ....’* (Kt/3/17). The recognition that – *‘...children need more than one approach [and] there are lots of ways of gaining meaning’* (Kt/2/10) is pragmatic and reveals an eclecticism according to perceived need - *‘I think in education we tend to throw the baby out with the bathwater a lot of the time...’* (Kt/2/10). However, Kate’s pragmatic stance is antithetical to current government policy (Rose 2006).



Gradually Kate resolves her position and is confident that – *'It [PD]) has taught me that it's about doing things in context...Rather than getting them to know, say, all their split digraphs...embedding in context works. They have to have a starting point e.g. basic phonic knowledge. If they have that and they can see how they have to apply it, it [reading] can develop quite quickly'* (Kt/3/17). This standpoint mirrors RR methodology and aligns with Brooks' (2007) view that embedded phonics is the most effective for struggling readers – *'...in a classroom, you deliver this set programme, come what may, and obviously these children haven't learnt in that way, so it's thinking about doing it in a different way and getting it right for them'* (Kt/LO/16). It seems to represent only a slight shift from Kate's original perspectives, but was of importance to her.

d) *'It feels scary'* (Kt/3/17)

Nias (1996) suggests 'that teachers' most positive feelings come from their work with students...' (p.304). A combination of pleasure at pupils' progress, with an apprehension that present success might not be repeated appears to provoke Kate's comment – *'It feels scary'* (Kt/3/17), an expression employed several times. In each case it seems to convey Kate's incredulity at pupils' progress – *'One of my children has gone up three years [reading age]; it's powerful; that's scary. Even the referred child<sup>59</sup> has a reading age only six months behind ...it's scary because it's down to you to use that [intervention] in the best way that you can ...'* (Kt/3/17). However, she realises the progress is not due to the intervention *per se*, but rather to her contingent application of instructional procedures. Her apprehension is linked to an increasing awareness of a responsibility to extend her expertise – *'Cos I have to get it right for the next one and that one may be different and there must be something that you haven't come across... for more children you need a bigger repertoire of skills'* (Kt/3/20). The challenge here is about tailoring teaching so that individual pupils with complex difficulties can learn. A mindset open to the possibility of her own continued learning (Loucks-

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<sup>59</sup> In RR 'referred' pupils have made progress but not accelerated progress; they are referred to school or specialist services for further assessment

Horsley 1996), further programme iterations and wider experience may convince Kate that expertise is within her grasp.

e) *'I know where to go and to get it from, not that I know...'* (K/3/19)

To summarise Kate's PD experience, I refer to the working definition of expertise proposed earlier in this chapter. She is eager to increase her content and pedagogical knowledge. The interface between daily practice and her theories about literacy acquisition is characterised by cycles of self-questioning and critical reflection (Brookfield 1986; Mezirow 1991), possibly enhanced by the research process itself – *'I've needed to collect my thoughts; I don't know what I've gone through until I sit and reflect; that's been a good experience'* (Kt/3/20). Kelchtermans' (2005) proposal that the act of 'telling' and making explicit developed or emerging understandings leads to self-knowledge, is apparently confirmed in her reflective practice.

Kate seeks consistently high self-performance – *'Anything less than perfect doesn't come easily'* (Kt/2/11). However, she concedes – *'I need to be a little more forgiving of myself'* (Kt/2/11). Realising the advantages of wide experience she presents as one prepared to continue her learning journey – *'the more children you have, the more difficulties you come across and the more you have in your repertoire'* (Kt/3/19).

Kate was promoted during the year and recognised as – *'someone with knowledge – it's scary sometimes'* (Kt/3/19), the latter comment appearing in this case to refer to the professional knowledge that is now expected of her. She has not found the expert role hard, but is unassuming and professionally generous – *'I've been a LITCo for 6 years. I know where to go and get it from, not that I know...'* (Kt/3/19) and *'[I'm] not so much the expert, but sharing expertise – you know how to, I know how to...'* (Kt/3/20).

An enhanced theoretical base was vital to Kate's sense of expertise and mirrors her original PD goal, but she also wanted to see new learning applied practically in classroom contexts and to do it well. I now examine participants'

expressed need to 'do it or get it [their practice] right' and trace their growing sense of self-efficacy as a consequence of the PD routes they were following. Interwoven amongst these data is a sub-theme of 'perfectionism' which appears to influence many participants including Kate.

### ***Improving practice***

#### *The development of self-efficacy belief*

'*Doing it right*' has emerged as an important concept in this study, understandable when considering participants' learning goals and when for most, the teaching procedures were new. If a teacher's self-efficacy derives from a sense of teaching well, a hypothesis confirmed by pupils' subsequent achievement, '*doing it right*' (Le/1/4) or aspiring to 'do it right' as defined and perceived by the teacher herself, must be important. Bandura (2001) sheds light on the significance of self-efficacy, his commentary especially meaningful when considering adults' motivation and persistence in demanding, complex professional learning contexts -

Efficacy beliefs play a central role in the self-regulation of motivation through goal challenges and outcome expectations. It is partly on the basis of efficacy beliefs that people choose what challenges to undertake, how much effort to expend in the endeavor, how long to persevere in the face of obstacles and failures, and whether failures are motivating or demoralizing. The likelihood that people will act on the outcomes they expect prospective performances to produce depends on their beliefs about whether or not they can produce those performances. A strong sense of coping efficacy reduces vulnerability to stress and depression in taxing situations and strengthens resiliency to adversity (p.10).

#### *Doing it 'right'*

In each CPD stream featured in this study, participants' challenges lay in grappling with and absorbing new perspectives and adopting novel practice or in introducing these to adult learners. With such high stakes as children's literacy learning, the participants needed to know that 'they [could] produce those performances' (*ibid.*). Linda's observation - '*You need to know that you're on right lines*' (Li/2/5) might have been replicated by all, concerned to do their best and feeling slightly exposed amongst peers and under pressure from the outset.

During the CPD the ideas underpinning *'doing it right'* may have altered several times in individuals' understandings, as did participants' self-perceptions of whether they *were* 'doing it right'. At first, the meaning of the expression seems to reside in acting *like* the leader, or doing what she suggests. As we have seen already, Di alludes to this – *'She models. I do the same. I sound like her'* (D/3/12).

However, as in Kalvinder's example of over-preparedness (p.127), more than imitation is required to make incisive teaching decisions for struggling readers. Rather as Dadds (1997) posits, the professional self must be nurtured -

... at the centre of professional development there has to be the nurturing of inner wisdom and critical judgement about what can be provided for each child in each situation... This is why the inner voice must be cultivated; personal theories must be evolved; belief in, and responsibility for the professional self seen as crucial and indispensable (p.33-34).

Developing fast decision-making, taking into account accumulated knowledge and past experience is part of the journey towards expert practice (Dreyfus 2004).

Di battles with self-doubt – *'I am struggling a bit, am I doing things correctly?'* (D/EJ6/9). For Peter, the imperative of – *'...reassurance...that I'm not so poor...I'm doing something that works'* (P/3/7) is intense, given his background (p. 74). Whether the felt pressure derives from external sources (e.g. SMT, colleagues, pupils' parents) or from self-imposed high expectations, each of these data echoes Keltchermans' (1996) vulnerability paradigm. For participants to be able to choose 'how much effort to expend in the endeavor' (Bandura *op.cit.*), constructive feedback is required to motivate and take them forward.

### *Teaching 'better' as an active stance*

*'Doing it right'* is important to Peter. His story echoes Dadds' insights and communicates a gradual sense of professional self and evolving pedagogical theories. Including critical reflection as part of a daily routine seems to sharpen his analytical skills – *'[I'm] constantly reflecting as I teach. "What's this showing that he [pupil] can do and what does he need to do next?"'* (P/3/6). Previously Peter found assessment and analysis difficult, but the motivation to refine his teaching is high (Bandura 2001) – *'I'm constantly going back to the book'<sup>60</sup>...reading it again and again, 'cos it's not sinking in...sometimes it takes me a while to understand what we have to do...Sometimes I finish a lesson and think – "Oh, I shouldn't have jumped in so quickly", but I've realised that I can't improve everything straight away'* (P/3/7).

Notwithstanding his frustration, Peter's deliberate approach to teaching and learning contrasts with a more passive stance earlier in his career - *'I was told [during his NQT year], "...you must make sure that every child has read to you twice a week and get them moving through the books". And that's what I did, and I suppose I didn't put enough thought into what I actually wanted them to do. They'd come with a reading book, read it to me, get another one and that was it'* (P/1/2). Likening the nature of CPD to - *'peeling an onion'* (P/3/7), Peter demonstrates a considered attitude to his current work and intends to continue improving – *'The basic thing I want is to teach better so that children make progress ...'* (P/3/7), a compelling goal at variance with *'usefulness'* (p.107). *'Doing it right'* has become linked with pupils' achievement. Although he rejects the *'expert'* label, Peter presents as a professional making independent decisions.

However, there is always a danger that teachers, especially the type who give *'110%'*, work too hard at *'doing it right'* and are never satisfied with their practice or with pupils' achievements.

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<sup>60</sup> Clay (2005)

### *A tendency to perfectionism*

A propensity to 'perfectionism' - flawlessness, setting extremely high standards of performance, overly critical self-evaluation (Flett & Hewitt 2002, cited in Stoeber & Rennert 2008) or irrational drivenness (Hargreaves 1994) - can be traced in this study's participants. Teachers may be particularly prone to perfectionism in the midst of reform or intensive CPD where the focus is on changed pedagogy and/or raised pupil attainment and where increased accountability is a factor. I have already noted Heather's struggle to accept standards other than her own (p.114) and Kate's related comments (p.122) and - '*I need to be a little more forgiving of myself*' (Kt/2/11). Eva too reveals - '*Whatever I do, I have to do 110%. I'm a terrible perfectionist*' (E/3/13).

Illingworth (2012, cited in Knowsley 2012) characterises conscientious teachers as '...always available, nothing [is] too much trouble - this is perfectionism,' and warns '...it can be at the expense of their health...' (p.29). However, Stoeber & Rennert (2008) assert that both positive and negative facets obtain from perfectionism -

Individuals who strive for perfection seem to perceive potential stressors as challenges, not as threats and losses, and show a preference for active coping, not avoidant coping. Consequently, they may not become stressed out when facing problems, but instead actively try to change the situation to the better (p.10).

The argument above is based on empirical findings that individual personality type makes a difference to how pressure is handled. The authors also found that the source of the pressure to be perfect is an important element -

Whereas perceived pressure from students was positively related to loss appraisals and perceived pressure from students' parents was positively related to burnout...perceived pressure from colleagues was inversely related to threat appraisals and burnout ...when overlap with all other facets of perfectionism was controlled for (p.9).

In this study, the pressure to perfectionism may stem from different sources in each individual concerned, but may also be related to personality type. Bearing in mind the selection of my participants (pp. 73 & 109) and the

tentative proposal that they might be rather more committed than other teachers, the latter hypothesis is also important.

The assumption that there are right ways (and thus also wrong ways) to teach lingers, deriving perhaps from aspiration to address the needs of young learners as directly as possible, on which premise many teachers enter the profession. It may equally originate from a lack of confidence or knowledge about the teaching of early literacy, or from uneasiness about change. An expert 'telling them what to do' (p. 130) is often what CPD participants think they need at an early point and reasonable when much is new. However, for PD to be effective it should be generative. That calls for teachers who are engaged intellectually, becoming independent, creative thinkers and decision-makers (Roskos & Bain 1998).

#### *Expert teaching to fit the child*

*Reading Recovery* teachers seek to strike a balance between being prepared for lessons while espousing Clay's (2005) notion of 'following the child', a key construct linked to having developed a close knowledge of the pupil's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1978) and discerning what needs to be taught next. Anticipating an observation from her PD leader, Kalvinder over-planned instead of preparing to respond contingently to the child - '*I had a big learning curve recently... I got it into my head, I'm being observed; therefore I need to plan for everything! As teachers we want to control the learning environment...*' (Ka/EJ1/6).

Ordinarily Kalvinder's thorough preparation would have been commendable, but 'following the child' can offer the potential for breakthrough in an aspect of the child's learning. It involves greater risk however, and requires the teacher's moment by moment decision-making, far from the controlled environment of which she speaks. Kalvinder's awareness of the dissonance between her high personal expectations and habituated ways of approaching the teaching task and her new perspectives open up the possibility of further learning, which she is quick to grasp.

Kalvinder's attitudinal shift is unequivocal and judicious. Talking of refining her teaching role she affirms that – *'The expertise that I want is not about regurgitation. I want each lesson to fit the child and to do it quicker, and a year on I'm still referring back [to the core text]...'* (Ka/3/15). For Kalvinder, expertise, as yet personally unachieved in her opinion, comprises tailored teaching and bringing teaching procedures to automaticity. These aspirations closely mirror the facility of performance noted earlier (Yielder 2004), and reflect her desire to be on top of the task. The realisation that expertise is developed through the teacher's sensitively judged, superbly scaffolded instruction is vital as Kalvinder nears the end of formal CPD; it also alerts her to a new beginning. Her self-analysis after recent success with a pupil involves a question to which she provides a response – *'Why did it work? You find out what you're doing and do it better'* (Ka/3/15). This is a striking demonstration of the impact of PD experienced, signifying growth in the development of self-regulation and self-efficacy belief.

## **Participants' changed and changing understandings - a summary**

I have concentrated on the modified and still evolving professional and personal theories of teachers recruited for this study and participating in CPD - theories relating to literacy acquisition, but also associated with features of adult learning. The reporting has been driven by emerging themes deemed to represent this study's data. I presented the learning objectives of each participant at the CPD outset (p.108), and noted the intensity of participants' engagement. The transformed perspectives of Di, Linda and Heather were framed in critical incident theory through which I explored the impact of teachers' expectations on children's learning, examined the development of critical reflection with power to shape practice, and traced the gradual growth of insights into aspects of adult learning including the need to determine what is essential – each theme prompted by specific events. Additionally I have portrayed Kate, who is not atypical among the participants in her thoughtful consideration of the pedagogical issues raised through the CPD, but who is



perhaps the most articulate. Through her frank and uninhibited ‘thinking aloud’ I have illustrated the depth of theoretical engagement and critical reflection in which participants were caught up. Her commitment to enriching practice is evident – *‘As you go along, it’s wanting to do things well and wanting to understand what you’re actually delivering, and then doing it the best way that you can. Good teachers will always do that’* (Kt/2/12), a sentiment echoed by others who required confirmation that they were *‘doing it right’*. In the final section, I have developed this idea and demonstrated the growth of self-efficacy belief, noting the CPD components which seemed to support its development – constructive feedback, a community of learners and critical reflection as regular routine.

I now consider the experiences of study participants in relation to models of expertise extended to them through leadership in their CPD contexts, exemplifying from my data and critiqued from a relevant literature. I begin with a reference to what for many has been the most recent representation of pedagogical expertise.

### **‘Expert’ models of PD leadership: participants discuss**

In the years following the introduction of the NLS (1998) literacy consultants were appointed to every LA in England. Their remit was to support and monitor literacy teaching to ensure that by 2002, the national target was reached - 80 per cent of 11 year olds at the expected standard for their age in English (National Curriculum (NC) Level 4). From 2006 their numbers proliferated as CLL consultants were recruited to disseminate Rose’s (2006) recommendations regarding *SSP*. With an extensive infrastructure including a regional directorate accountable directly to the DCSF<sup>61</sup>, the ‘Strategy’ as it became known, wielded much influence in schools. Consultants’ direct dealings were usually with the LITCo whose task was to ‘cascade’ the most recent advice to staff, though Hayes (2000) suggests that the cascade had reduced to a ‘trickle’ by the time it reached the classroom teacher. Schools with weak Ofsted inspection results were likely to be offered intensive

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<sup>61</sup> From May 2010, the DfE

support to lift them out of 'special measures'<sup>62</sup>. It is not hard to understand why teachers, already under pressure to reach floor targets, might form negative views of 'experts' who frequently visited school, while many complained of innovation overload or what seemed to them like excessive monitoring (Maclure 1993).

A positive impact of the CPD featured in this study relies on participants' perceptions of their PD leaders as knowledgeable and experienced in working successfully, sensitively and sustainably with teachers in their specialist field. It seems clear that mutual respect and a willingness to learn are necessary for optimal learning in this context. Given the lengthy period of CPD involvement, a factor recognised as helping to consolidate adult learning (Elmore 2004), closer relationships than those generally afforded with literacy consultants resulted. However, the reality is that the participants varied markedly in their appreciation of teacher-educators and their distinct instructional styles. The following sections illustrate participants' diverse reactions to their CPD experience, specifically to its leadership.

### *The poverty of the transmission model*

Eva's passion for working with pupils in an area of social disadvantage is apparent as is her pleasure that school's efforts to provide meaningful language and literacy experiences for its pupils are paying off. However, Eva has rejected the model of expertise modelled by her LA consultant. Their first meeting only serves to formalise an action plan that she had developed already. She claims her colleagues would prefer her to work with them rather than the outside expert. They are said to resent an external person - '*telling them what to do*' (E/2/7). Regardless of whether this is an accurate portrayal of the consultant's leadership style or correct analysis of colleagues' responses, 'telling' or the 'transmission model' is wholly familiar to teacher audiences and its efficacy has long been questioned (Lock 2006).

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<sup>62</sup> Following Ofsted inspections, 'special measures' is the lowest status descriptor

Eva (like Heather) is in the intriguing position of both receiving and giving PD regularly. Perhaps the dual roles of learner and teacher-educator heighten awareness of differing PD approaches and their corresponding potential for change or resistance – ‘*I like to see modelled sessions, theory and practice.... When I cascade, I do a workshop...they need to practise and...see it working. They take it back to the classroom, have a staff meeting two weeks later and evaluate together what has worked, what hasn’t and what are the issues... This model...has massive impact straightaway*’ (E/1/5). Eva’s approach is patently not about ‘*telling them what to do*’. Rather she pursues mentoring relationships with school staff to progress her goals, her style echoed in Glaser’s (1996) model (*below*). In the following section Kalvinder reveals her preferred learning approaches by analysing her negative reaction to externally-led school PD.

#### *A gradual change of agency*

Unlike from Dreyfus’ (2004) linear model of developing expertise, Glaser (*op.cit.*) hypothesises a framework in which a ‘change of agency for learning as expertise develops and performance improves’ (p. 305) underlies the acquisition of competence. Three interactive phases are envisaged, whereby decreasing support is applied as the learner passes from *external support* (environmental structuring involving appropriate persons), to *transition* (decreased scaffolding and increased apprenticeship) to *self-regulation* where the learner as ‘developing expert’ is mainly in control. In support of this theory Kalvinder’s spontaneous reflection highlights how PD can misfire when insufficiently scaffolded. She describes a school staff meeting, led by an external specialist and contrasts this experience with *RR/IPD*. She critiques the – ‘*visiting professional*’ (Ka/EJ1/8) unflatteringly and reports colleagues’ adverse reactions (*Box 4.1*). It seems that the presentation style – opening with a somewhat opaque question without exploring the level of scaffolding the group might require to support its involvement – drove the presenter and teachers apart irretrievably. The resulting impasse appears to have affected the presenter’s assurance and the staff’s confidence in her ability to progress their understanding of the theme.

#### **Box 4.1: Kalvinder's e-journal entry**

**Theme: 'Emotional Literacy'**

**Venue: school; LA advisory lead**

*Presentation included two very short DVD clips and a handout. For the opening of the session staff were asked by the visiting professional (v.p) what we understood by the term 'emotional literacy'. This set the scene for the whole session. Nobody volunteered an answer. She then said 'Discuss within your group.' People started discussing, but you could hear that the conversations were not focused on the question. The v.p then started talking in a quiet voice for feed back from each group. It took a few minutes for the staff to realise that their discussion time was over. The session continued in the same vein. The next day I couldn't remember without referring to the handout what I had learnt...*

Kalvinder's unfavourable evaluation underlines the importance of PD design which addresses teachers' learning style by providing tailored guidance (Darling-Hammond & Richardson 2009). It seems reasonable to suggest that her awareness of the presentational deficit was heightened by disparity with an approach she finds conducive to learning - *'[I value] time to reflect. I don't think teachers are given or take the time to reflect how difficult the tasks of reading and writing are for children'* (Ka/EJ1/7). As a senior staff-member, participating in and leading CPD, she values the cumulative effect of *RR* methodology with elements reintroduced in a spiral curriculum (Taylor 2006) and appropriate change of agency - *'What I find different about RR training... is the layered approach. I know I don't have to know everything before I take the next step. The step I am on is ahead of the children, but I don't feel swamped with information from which I have to filter the parts I need'* (Ka/EJ1/8). Kalvinder's insights suggest that an iterative process over time, a *'layered approach'* with a combination of methodologies can dispel anxiety about 'getting it right', enabling a natural evolution from external support to self-regulation.

Di's approach to learning however is different and seems to depend on emulating the teaching expertise demonstrated in situ, with coaching.

### *Emulating the 'expert outside'*

Di's response is a tribute to the knowledge and performance attributes of her RR/IPD leader - '*I sound like G<sup>63</sup>; I learn by a perfect example*' (D/3/12). The reference to 'a perfect example' however, almost elevates G 'to saintly status, a responsibility far beyond the liking of most' (Dadds 1997, p.33), and to an ideal likely to obstruct Di's own learning. Dadds' comments may lend insight to Di's reaction -

Somewhere along the line, many have learnt to feel that others' visions and experiences are much better than their own. They have learnt to seek the 'expert' outside, but deny there may be a potential 'expert' within' (*ibid.*).

It may be that organisations such as Ofsted and TDA with their 'outstanding' criteria to which teachers aim have exacerbated this notion among teachers. Perhaps Di's reaction is reasonable when her situation is considered fully. It has been eight years since her engagement in any PD, except that available within school. She is - '*excited about it*', affirms that she is - '*ready for it*' and likens it to a - '*gift box*' (D/1/3). The metaphor seems to convey her enthusiasm about her PD experience hitherto - an element of surprise, a parcel containing several gifts opened slowly with mounting expectancy and anticipation of more to come. Yet the question of why external ideas should necessarily be better than 'our own' persists. Dadds contends that teachers on the ground are the best placed to know and teach their children; conversely it may be equally limiting for teachers to continue in 'safe mode' (*ibid.*) with little challenge to their assumptions about what is possible.

What happens when teachers find their strong beliefs conflict directly with those of their PD leader and thus with one who might reasonably be deemed an 'expert'? This is Leila's narrative.

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<sup>63</sup> G - PD leader

### *From dissonance to cynicism*

Leila has worked hard in a school which despite immense effort remains stubbornly at the foot of the borough's LA league table. In 2009, only 56 per cent of pupils achieved NC Level 4 or above in KS-2 English SATs<sup>64</sup> in contrast to a national average of 80 per cent (DCFS 2009). Her attitude to pedagogy is allied closely with current inclusion policy – *'Every child's learning is different ... I need to make sure I teach them at the pace they need, but ... give them challenges so that they can move on. Children are just individuals...You don't look at them like, "Well, this week children we're going to learn this and if you don't get it, then we're going to move on, because this is what the book says, so let's all do it." They are individuals and you want them to have success as well...'* (Le/1/3). The precise aspect explicated above, that of respecting children's differing learning pace, was however at variance with the espoused theory of her PD leader who expected children to progress briskly.<sup>65</sup>

Leila acknowledges her need of someone to - *'help and guide'* (Le/1/4) through the maze of *L & S* materials. She perceives the consultant and herself to be - *'peers'* (Le/1/4) cooperating to plan, teach and evaluate the SSP programme. She is happy to observe and be observed, but refutes any self-suggestion, that the consultant might be - *'above'* her (Le/2/7). The view that underlies this egalitarianism is supported by Dadds (1997) -

Teachers ...do not enter into CPD as empty vessels. They bring existing experiences, practices, perspectives, insights and, most usually, anxieties about the highly complex nature of their work. They usually enter CPD courses brimful of thoughts and feelings; with implicit or explicit beliefs about education and their work with children. They come with differences, disagreements, preconceptions, uncertainties, missions (p.32).

Leila brings 'implicit beliefs' and much more to the CPD, namely empathy for her pupils. She has a clear sense of 'mission', but with school's current attainment, she must consider alternative approaches. *The L & S* materials

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<sup>64</sup> Standard assessment tasks

<sup>65</sup> In contrast, *Letters and sounds* (DCFS 2007) allows for children to 'make progress at a pace that befits their enlarging capabilities' (p.3) and suggests that some may 'need more time and support to secure their learning' (p.4)

seem to prejudice her initial thoughts - *'The DVD of guided reading is really good, but my children aren't at that level...Y1 would just sit there. [They're good] for children with these strategies, but mine would forget them...they're not ready...the ideas are good'* (Le/2/5) - although an alarm bell rings when teachers declare their children so 'poor' that they cannot be reached by similar approaches to those nationally.

Leila objects to the perceived wisdom represented by the consultant - *'I have a group of 6 who still don't know any of the letters from Phase 2...I was told that with L&S you can't stay...you have to move them on...revision cards will eventually do the job ...It's definitely working for the majority, but what do I do with the 6 who are falling behind?'* (Le/3/11). It seems that she found the consultant unable to answer questions about pupils' persistent lack of progress, or to help address the issue causing her anxiety. Following weeks of 'stalemate', Leila negotiated a compromise - *'I'm going to do as I've been told to...but they're getting extra support in the afternoons...and [the consultant has agreed] 2 letter sounds a week instead of 4'* (Le/3/11). By bringing her professional knowledge and skill to the task, Leila demonstrates how an experienced teacher can adapt a programme to suit pupils' learning needs in her context (Datnow *et al.*, 2002, cited in Stoll *et al.*, 2006).

Subsequently, with some progress made, her opinion of L & S softens - *'At first, I sounded quite sceptical didn't I, but I really like Letters and sounds... (Le/3/13)...I can't argue that it has had a result on children. Phase 2 is great. Phase 3 - they're not applying what they've done in phonics to reading... It's coming with the more able children, but I don't have a lot of more able children! They know the letter sounds on cards, [and in the] sentences, but in guided reading phonics is finished with, they're not thinking of phonics, so you're forever having to remind them....'* (Le/3/11).

Leila acknowledges - *'Yes, at first I thought my kids couldn't do that [learn four sounds each week] and some have proved me wrong'* (Le/3/12). Her view of the consultant however does not alter - *'You think they're experts; I*

*don't believe it all...*' (Le/3/13). To Leila, the consultant failed to 'demonstrate a consistently high standard and facility of performance and manner in novel problem-solving situations' (p.105). Perhaps the AST pattern (*below*) of continuing to practise in a base school with an outreach element could have strengthened Leila's consultant's capacity to support teachers like Leila practically.

### *The practising teacher-educator*

Heather is recognised locally as a phonics specialist and is ambitious to be an AST. She is prepared to shadow, be observed and peer coached to equip her for the qualification. She has been content to be both teacher and learner, and based on her recent experience strongly advocates the AST model – *'as a teacher, if you're going into school you can actually say, "I'm doing it [and] it's successful", whereas as a consultant you're not practising what you preach, you're not doing it every day. It gives you street cred'* (H/3/11).

Heather's attitude is similar to Lyons *et al.*, (1993) who argue for 'a new role in education, the practicing (sic) professional teacher-educator' (p.13), perhaps a useful paradigm for PD leadership generally. It seems essential to the participants that their CPD is led by someone equipped with a relevant knowledge base, but also grounded in recent experience of classroom application. *Reading Recovery* endorses this CPD model and additionally utilises a one-way mirror as a lens for close observation of teacher and pupil behaviour.

### *Observation as a vehicle for knowledge construction*

For those following the *RR/IPD* route<sup>66</sup>, observation of colleagues' teaching through a one-way mirror with real-time discourse led by PD leaders on the alternative side of the screen is an important learning resource, as it has been from the inception of *RR* –

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<sup>66</sup> Di, Kalvinder, Kate, Linda and Peter



The key word in the development and implementation of this inservice program (sic) was...observation...One teacher taught one child. On the other side of the one-way screen the teacher's peers watched intently the child's behaviours and the teacher's decisions (Clay & Watson 1982, p.192).

Observation of teachers' live lessons is still relatively unusual beyond ITE, but can act powerfully as a vehicle for knowledge construction. The purpose of dialogue among observers is to advance adult learning, by challenging assumptions concerning literacy acquisition theory and practice through detailed description and analysis of the observed lesson. It is also suggested that 'Seeing similar others perform successfully can raise efficacy expectations in observers that they too possess the capabilities to master comparable activities' (Bandura *et al.*, 1977, cited in Flavell & Ross 1981). A genuine opportunity is created to co-construct professional feedback for the teacher supporting the pupil's learning needs.

Teaching behind the one-way mirror triggers assorted emotions,<sup>67</sup> for teaching is 'emotional work' (Hargreaves 1994). Peter's lesson is imminent and he is - '*...scared about that, big time*' (P/2/4). He seems to fear negative criticism, probably linked to his past experience with Ofsted (p. 74) and his need for validation is apparent. Linda has already taught for her colleagues and with hindsight regards the experience positively. She regrets that '*The average teacher doesn't see this – it's striking, different, in real time, not rehearsed, in the raw...*' (Li/EJ1/15), the latter phrase seeming to communicate something of her felt vulnerability as an experienced teacher in a demanding situation (Keltchermans 2005).

Fullan (2007) acknowledges that opening the classroom doors is difficult, and associates the experience with the power of PLCs collaborating to improve instruction –

Deprivatizing teaching changes culture and practice so that teachers observe other teachers, are observed by others, and participate in informed and telling debate on the quality and effectiveness of their instruction (p.36).

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<sup>67</sup> RR teachers bring individual children to teach behind the screen

However, it seems that 'culture' changes only slowly. Di's remark - *'The best bit is seeing how other people do it'* (D/2/6) dovetails with Kate's account - *'At the beginning...it's interesting, you're looking...and picking up things. In some ways it's quite comforting... I think, "I do that"...we're all doing it in pretty much the same way'* (Kt/3/18). Both evaluations imply that the main interest early is at the level of technical expertise, revolving around the reassurance gained by comparing self-perceived skills with those of others. Yet Fullan's argument for 'deprivatizing' teaching reaches beyond 'tips for teachers' and identifies 'debate on the quality and effectiveness of [teachers'] instruction' as the goal. Given the early preoccupation with peer comparison is there evidence to demonstrate that the study's *RR* participants eventually engage in the level of discourse required to transform understandings leading to improved pupils results and supporting sustainability (Lieberman 1995; Coburn 2003)?

Surprisingly few data about the live lesson experience have been garnered. Peter's perspective is vague - *'I like the live lessons for different reasons. I see good points ... and analyse the teaching, ask why, discuss and hear different points of view'* (P/3/7). Di's reflection is similar - *'G might say, "I agree but...." and gives another view; the session is a soundboard for ideas and theories'* (D/3/11), though she seems to recognise the dialectical purpose. Kate offers greater detail - *'It's about thinking the theory through, why is he doing that?...Looking more, looking deeper, what is going to make an impact, thinking about what will have the effect... why that word, that child, that approach...?'* (Kt/3/18). In keeping with the social constructivist epistemology inherent in the *RR/IPD* model (*Appendix L*) and exemplified in Kate's reflection - *'You've had to work it out yourself. At the beginning I was looking for answers - "Tell me what to do". There wasn't any of that...'* (Kt/3/18), learners are rarely given a definitive answer, but must apply a thinking process to make informed decisions instead of re-enacting a particular technique. Any frustration apparent here can be construed positively. It is suggested that conceptual change is dependent on

dissatisfaction acting as a motivator for seeking out new understandings, or improving practice (Pintrich *et al.*, 1993).

Lastly, it is intriguing to note that Kalvinder, Kate and Linda, three highly experienced teachers, candidly acknowledging the challenge of practice refinement and with eleven months PD behind them, persist in their desire to see a 'perfect' lesson behind the one-way mirror. Searching for an explanation I suggest that in the desire to excel and reach their pupils, they wish to emulate the components and replicate the lesson, in which case they have misunderstood the nature of the individually designed and delivered lesson series (Clay 2005), and much about the theory of knowledge underlying the CPD in which they are engaging. Perhaps being shown or told how it is done is assumed to be an easier task? We will never know; like so many aspects of human behaviour their reasons seem unclear.

### **Models of expertise in this study context – a summary**

The 'expert' visiting school to present, demonstrate or 'fix things' meets with a mixed reception from participants; in this study the response to the PD leaders who are involved with teacher-learners in an extended capacity, ranges from admiration to negativism and extends to cynicism. Since it is the goal to win over the more sceptical participants to maximise the potential of the PD experience, a less than positive start is problematic.

I have argued that the transmission model seems less likely to reach teacher audiences in meaningful ways than a gradual change of agency for learning progressing to self-regulation. Di, Kalvinder and Heather seem satisfied that their teacher-educators can facilitate this progression due to their knowledge, experience and capacity to scaffold instruction. Di values modelling; Kalvinder's individual approach to learning is fortuitously similar to that of *RR/IPD* which proffers graduated input over time and encourages space for reflection; Heather believes a combination of techniques is her best way forward – coaching, trying out adult learning techniques with joint reflection

following, while maintaining her classroom grounding. Collectively they demonstrate how mutual respect between teachers and adult learners enables valuable teaching and learning.

However, two participants are unhappy with the expertise modelled in their learning contexts: Eva can justify her objection to the consultant because she has her staff's support. She modifies her attitude only when KS-2 colleagues respond negatively to her own plans (*p. 104*). Leila recognises the difficulty of raising recalcitrant literacy levels and knows she must try new methodologies despite her low opinion of her LA consultant - '*You think they're experts*' is a damning analysis and not easily retrievable. In both instances the teacher-participants and their consultants fail to benefit from opportunities for meaningful collaboration.

Access to a community of learners, core texts (Clay 2005a & b) and teacher-educators who continue to teach children are important vehicles for the continuous learning of *RR* practitioners, while the facilitated discussions at the screen afford unique and fascinating fora for teachers to examine, critique, reshape and/or transform their hypotheses about literacy teaching and learning (Lyon *et al.*, 1993). There is however a danger that observers may understand *RR* lessons simply as exemplars, even as '*perfect model[s]*' (Li/2/5) to be emulated. Although it is acknowledged that there is no such thing as the 'perfect' lesson, some are noticeably closer to recommended practice than others. Exemplary teaching can act positively for others to consider and imitate, while weaker practice may be accepted as the norm if the conversation is not managed constructively or sensibilities are so keenly felt that it is ignored. It takes time for participants to develop from observers of the action behind the screen, comparing teaching moves, to astute discussants of the effectiveness of teachers' decision-making.

## Looking back: looking forward...

Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave (Bandura 1994) and the 'feel good' factor is a prime motivator in professional learning (Guskey 2005). Thus, this chapter's title - *'It's given me kudos...'* seems to encapsulate the positive emotional state of the participant (Di) *because* of the knowledge and skills increased through her experience of CPD. From uncertain beginnings most participants grow to value their PD and appreciate its impact, some noticeably more than others. This section integrates their evaluations as they reflect on its influence and challenge, and as they look forward to assimilating the knowledge and skills into their professional lives. I tentatively propose that the strong positive emotions experienced during their CPD experience (at varying points for each participant) was sufficient to support them during the lowest phases, while the 'pain' (Shulman 2000) felt by participants to different degrees may have produced deeper learning.

### ***Dealing with regret***

Writing on the emotional dimensions of teachers' work, Hargreaves identifies guilt as a 'central emotional preoccupation for teachers' (1994 p.142). He draws on Davies' (1989) work suggesting that guilt emerges in situations where 'individuals feel they have ignored, betrayed or failed to protect the people or values that symbolize their good internal object' (p.143). That seems true of Linda who feels guilty about past pupils' progress - *'I didn't help them nearly as much as I could have done; you feel guilty that you could have done more for [them]'* (Li/2/6). Davies (*ibid.*) argues that 'at the centre of the feeling of guilt is self-disappointment, a sense of having done badly, fallen short, of having betrayed a personal ideal, a standard or commitment'. In view of the commitment to nurture or care common to most primary teachers, and the learning objectives expressed by participants at the start of the year, it is not surprising that guilt is also experienced by others.

Heather almost apologises *'...you feel well (pause) quite embarrassed really that you didn't see ... how important phonics was and quite angry that it*

*hasn't been seen as important in school'* (H/1/3). There is here also a suggestion of indignation on behalf of the pupils whom she considers may have been failed. With its negative connotations and complex mix of frustration, anxiety, regret and anger, guilt may be regarded as a potentially damaging emotion, but it can also act as a powerful stimulus to personal or professional transformation.

Kate notes how renewed action can spring from feelings of guilt - '*At ISS*<sup>68</sup>, *everybody's trying to do their best for their children and sometimes you feel that you're not doing that. If there's no movement, you worry that you're not doing your best*' (Kt/3/20). Her statement echoes David Hargreaves' observation in Hargreaves (1994) that the tendency to strong emotion derives from teachers' 'fundamental competence anxiety', related to feeling ineffectual before colleagues or to oneself, and perhaps a root of the tendency to perfectionism. He suggests that its source lies in an uncertain 'technical base for the profession of teaching' (p.150).

Di laments the inadequate instruction for literacy teaching in ITE - '*If I'd known this before I'd have had better results...I had a huge gap in my knowledge which has been filled...does that make me sound ignorant? ...this opened up and then plugged the gap*' (D/3/12). Her dissatisfaction triggers a series of actions within school with Di driving them - a staff meeting, an audit of literacy instruction and the introduction of layered literacy interventions.

### ***Strong self-efficacy supports perseverance***

Much has been learnt in recent decades about what makes PD most powerful (*Chapter Two*). The 'feel good' factor and a stronger self-efficacy as PD outcomes should not be underestimated. Rather in the face of obstacles and during periods of relative failure they might be viewed as motivators for participants to persist (Guskey 2005; Bandura 2001). Di '*feels good*' (D/3/13) and those feelings seem to derive from experiences as a learner, success

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<sup>68</sup> ISS – RR/IPD was known as 'In service sessions or ISS' until recently

with pupils like Joanna and her capacity to assist TAs with struggling readers. After being like *'part of the furniture'*, for so long she feels re-energised.

Leila expresses her modified perspectives - *'I feel much better...I really like Letters and sounds. Now I feel more comfortable, I can tweak it. I have all the resources for it... I will make changes next year...'* (L/4313). Feeling *'much better'* seems to imply a restoration of control to Leila to the extent that she can *'tweak it [learning programme]'* and *'make changes.'* Her initial misgivings regarding L & S may have signified a loss of independence, when prior to the PD she was in charge. Her apprehension about working with a consultant and her insistence on equality possibly masked a deep-seated vulnerability. Her early doubt (in the consultant and/or in L&S) was confirmed by a dearth of practical advice and threatened her self-belief. Loss (e.g. of self-assurance, status) can affect those involved in educational change, often with harmful results (Evans 1996). Leila's persistence is rewarded by pupil progress and a sense of empowerment through the development of a wider perspective.

Reviewing her individual journey, Kalvinder is positive - *'I feel this year's been such a learning curve for me'* and conveys personal pride – *'I'm now on my 8<sup>th</sup> child'* (Ka/3/14). However, deeper analysis indicates that her assurance may not be based on *self-efficacy*, but on external affirmation – *'M<sup>69</sup> observed me twice; I was behind the screen twice. You feel that you are...I mean... I haven't failed; you've actually got that recognition, someone's watched you do this and it's what you're supposed to be doing ...'* (Ka/3/15). This flicker of self-doubt appears to diminish Kalvinder's pleasure in her achievements. It seems difficult for teachers to be personally convinced of their effectiveness.

### ***The power of positive affect***

Thinking through the impact of CPD on my participants' emotions, and as an analytic tool to support an understanding of what seemed to be happening to

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<sup>69</sup> M – Kalvinder's PD leader

them, I drafted *Figure 4:2*. The diagram seems to show how at the apparently lowest points in their PD year, positive affect - astonishment and pride at pupil progress, a sense of support from PD leaders and/or group, enjoyment of the CPD input – were sufficiently strong to carry participants through the more challenging or intense times. Negative affect is also articulated - feeling aggrieved, challenged, guilty, self-doubting and resentful – and seems to have occurred concurrently. This pattern tends to support Bandura’s view that efficacy beliefs can support people to cope in the face of challenge and persevere when things are not going well (*p. 123*).



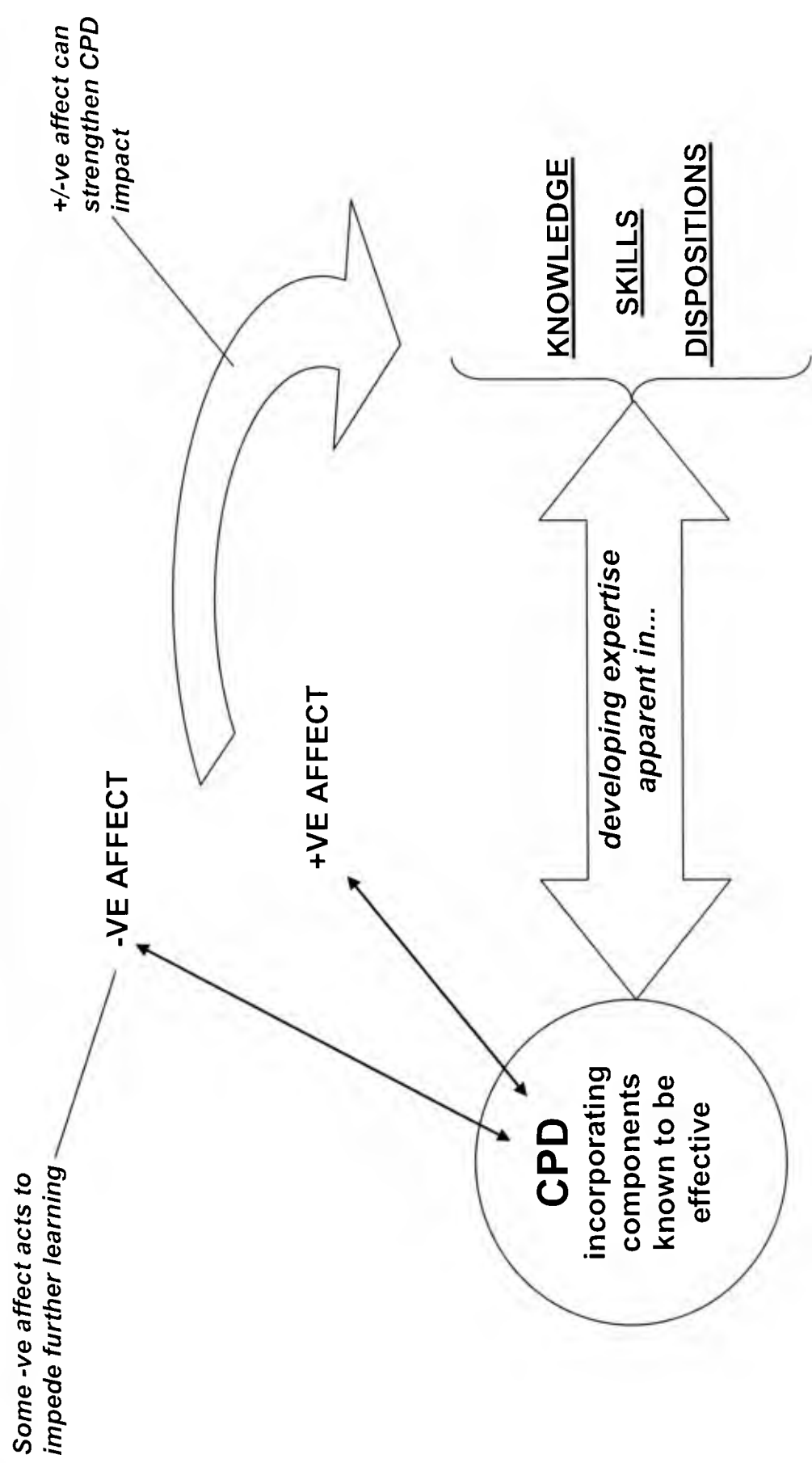
**Figure 4.2: Participants developing theoretical understandings and making pedagogical change, while experiencing an interrelated range of emotion, expressed or inferred at early, mid & end points of CPD**

1. The development of participants' knowledge, skills and dispositions towards the realisation of their learning goals is ongoing ...
2. Participants' emotional journeys through their respective CPD demonstrate changed & changing feelings; positive affect (underlined, **bold**) is seen to carry participants through the most challenging & emotionally lowest mid-year period

PARTICIPANT	EARLY CPD – inferred or in vivo	APPROX. MID. CPD – inferred or in vivo	TOWARDS END CPD – inferred or in vivo
<b>Kate</b>	Confident; expectant; denies 'challenge'	Challenged; frustrated with self; <b>astonished at pupil progress</b> ; tussling; reflective	Raised self-esteem; highly-motivated; 'scared'; PD= 'a rollercoaster'; valued; 'sharing expertise'
<b>Eva</b>	Super-confident; independent	Critical of & somewhat challenged by resistant adults; <b>determined to achieve goals</b> ;	Frustrated; critical; relatively satisfied; 'a hamster on a wheel'
<b>Heather</b>	Open to further learning; enthusiastic	Slightly aggrieved; frustrated with self; <b>'it's making me stronger'</b>	'Secure' in pedagogy; increasingly accepting of varying professional views
<b>Kalvinder</b>	Self-assured	Critical; <b>surprised by pupils' progress</b> ; <b>feels supported &amp; enjoying CPD</b> ; reflective	Proud; PD= a 'learning curve' with 'ups & downs'; recognises expertise as lessons <b>'fitting'</b> the child'
<b>Leila</b>	Confident; determined; seems threatened/ vulnerable	Critical of consultant; sceptical of SSP; tussling; <b>'quite comfortable'</b>	Accepting; critical; 'feel much better'; confident; cynical regarding external expertise on offer
<b>Di</b>	Feels taken for granted; excited; hopeful of CPD promise='a gift'	Guilty; regretful; self-doubting; challenged; <b>enjoying CPD</b>	Feeling 'good'; 'it's given me kudos'; open to continuous learning; excited; self-describes as 'expert'
<b>Linda</b>	Feels 'ignorant'; enjoying CPD which is building confidence	Aware of self-change; regretful; vulnerable; pressured; <b>PD='It's just fabulous'</b>	Competent; uncomfortable; open to continuous learning; critical; living with teacher/learner tension; recognised as 'expert'
<b>Peter</b>	'I'm getting more insight'; regretful; increasingly confident	Regretful; <b>proud at pupils' success</b> ; <b>determined to improve</b>	Validated; challenged; setting own goals; 'I don't believe I'm an expert'

I reflected further - would my study's participants have learnt less if they had not experienced a measure of anxiety or discomfort? Shulman (2000), adopting the Socratic adage regarding the unexamined life is of that view (see *page 60*). Was the experience of negative affect how ever manifested, actually a trigger for deeper or transformed learning under the guidance of skilful PD leadership? In *Figure 4.3* I have hypothesised such a model - the interaction between CPD input and strong affect (both positive and negative) associated with CPD. I consider that the model reflects the experiences of most participants whose learning seemed strengthened by the intensity of the CPD, specifically Leila who had to struggle alone to determine solutions to her problems. The exception is Eva whose personal relationship with her PD leader broke down seemingly irretrievably, so that negative affect - in this case resentment and lack of respect – prevented further learning. Had this relationship been restored - and I suggest that it is always the PD leader's responsibility to instigate reconciliation - further learning might have been enabled.

Figure 4.3: Effective CPD develops knowledge, skills & dispositions. Both positive & negative affect can serve to strengthen the impact of CPD when led by astute & skilful teacher-educators



### ***A productive tension***

Underpinning the current discourse is the concept of lifelong learning as a means of updating of knowledge in the literacy field. It is promising that after nearly a year's PD, several participants speak of their commitment to continuous learning, although the coexistence of two identities, learner and teacher, may generate a powerful but productive tension.

Asked how she feels at the end of her course, Linda's reply is a nervous blend of apparent contradictions – *'In some ways, much more competent, but you don't necessarily feel it (laughs); I've developed in confidence and in competence, but because of the nature of the role there's always something new to learn'* (Li/3/12). She touches the heart of the matter: in every profession, there is always more to know and far more to learn. There is no sense of 'arrival', an idea well illustrated by Senge's insights -

People with a high level of personal mastery live in a continual learning mode. They never 'arrive'. People with a high level of personal mastery are acutely aware of their ignorance, their incompetence, their growth areas. And they are deeply self-confident. Paradoxical? Only for those who do not see that the journey is the reward (1990, p.142).

Linda understands that living with dichotomy is common to *RR/IPD* participants – *'[We're] delivering a programme that requires the speedy development of skills and expertise, whilst assuming the role of an expert'* (Li/EJ3/7). Referring to her continuing struggles - *'with making effective decisions on the spot'* (Li/3/7), her answer is - *'to dig deeper. You know where the children have got to be'* (Li/3/7). The swing towards self-directed learning is noteworthy, a shift echoed by others as they transit from external support to self-regulation in the final PD phase and beyond (Glaser 1996).

Although Heather appears to have exacting ideas of what constitutes *SSP* lessons, she admits to – *'like[ing] going into other classrooms. You often learn things and you say "Why have I never used that?"'* (H/1/6). The dual role as teacher and *AST* candidate seems to support her learning and leading and confers credibility. She is - *'still the learner and the teacher...'* This is – *'not a problem...'* (H/3/11). Heather's renewed attitude to pedagogy may support the fulfilment of her ambitions.

Self-efficacy belief, characterised as conviction about one's capability to perform at a certain level can affect identity. Recognition by *others* is also desirable, especially from senior staff responsible to support and motivate (Pedder *et al.*, 2008). However, acknowledgement is not always forthcoming and participants in professional learning programmes may need to sustain their cognitive and pedagogical gains by identifying alternative outlets for extending new accomplishments. In his school context, one requiring encouragement, but remaining largely unnoticed was Peter.

### ***Learning transforms who we are***

Taking up the ECaR reins while experiencing negligible SMT support is galling to Peter, though intriguing for this study.<sup>70</sup> While rejecting the term 'expert' as applied to him personally, he tentatively clarifies - *'I think I'm starting to believe now that I have gained quite a lot of knowledge and skills about how to teach and how to help children read. I don't believe I'm an expert...not like the [ECaR] publicity... they want you to be seen ...as someone teachers could go to....but I've started on information about the prompts, I'm going to lead a staff meeting... and I've put up a display.... My head teacher is not interested, so I've got to do it [ECaR] myself and be pro-active and that's to do with confidence...That was getting me down, but now I've decided it's up to me...I'm going to work with the dinner ladies, and support them to hear readers...'* (P/3/8). Though extremely diffident, Peter seems to have fulfilled his original goal. His repudiation of the 'expert' label may be due to a personal concept of the comprehensiveness of an expert's knowledge and a clear grasp of his own need for continuous professional learning, as much as any disquiet about the responsibility it confers.

Peter's story validates Keltchermans' vulnerability hypothesis. His continuing state seems to be one of susceptibility. However, the energy inspired by emergent self-belief is apparent in his resolution - *'it's up to me'* and his determination to - *'be pro-active'* despite disappointment. Given Peter's personal narrative, I infer that something else must have helped him persevere

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<sup>70</sup> Within ECaR schools a team is usually established to ensure the intervention is rolled out strategically and coherently

in spite of school's apathy. Perhaps it was the headiness of success with previously confused children (*Figures 4:2&3*), or perhaps the support of his group or PD leader. Whatever the reason, Peter's actions confirm Wenger's observation that – '...learning transforms who we are and what we can do' (1998, p.215).

Peter's story also highlights the significance of workplace contexts for sustaining the impact of PD (McLaughlin & Talbert 1993, cited in Berliner 2001). Head teachers' and governing bodies' support can add weight to the achievements of individual teachers and promote a strategic approach to CPD (Porritt 2009), professional accountability and value for money (TDA 2011).

### **Exploring the themes of expertise and affect in teachers' professional learning - a summary**

I have reported, analysed and discussed qualitative data generated from eight experienced teachers undertaking extended CPD focused on the teaching of literacy to Year 1 pupils. Running through the data is the theme of expertise - expressed in the goals determined by participants who exhibit high motivational levels throughout, while engaging with new (to them) literacy acquisition theory; demonstrated in their accumulating professional knowledge, developing pedagogical features and in skill refinement to suit the varied needs of beginning readers; apparent through the experience of leadership models acknowledged as expert or found wanting; and evident through participants' acceptance or rejection of the 'expert label' when ascribed to them by others or through self-realisation.

Parallel with the notion of expertise is a distinct but intersecting theme of affectivity in relation to adults' advanced professional learning. There is much to report in terms of participants' raised confidence and enhanced competence encapsulated in the notion of self-efficacy. However, each participant also experiences a range of competing complex emotions as fundamental beliefs and previous methodologies are evaluated, challenged and in part or whole transformed. Guilt, regret, disappointment, frustration and surprise (*Figure 4:2*)

are experienced, but it is hypothesised that in most cases these are harnessed to strengthen and deepen CPD outcomes.

In the following chapter I discuss the implications of my study's findings in the light of a rapidly changing educational environment in England, reflecting a move to the market place in which continued professional development is a commodity to be bought and/or sold by schools.

## **CHAPTER FIVE     What can this study contribute to educationalists' understanding of effective CPD?**

### **Introduction**

My research goal was to explore the question – *'What is the impact of extended professional development in early literacy acquisition on the personal and professional perspectives of Year 1 teachers?'*

As I analysed more deeply into this study's qualitative data garnered from multiple sources two linked themes began to become clear - 1. expertise, as an explicit or implicit goal, a model demonstrated, practice realised and/or a construction about which some participants had reservations when applied to themselves; and 2. strong emotions or affect experienced by the study's participants, associated with and quite possibly a catalyst to a more powerful learning experience.

I now discuss the data analysed and reported in Chapter Four in relation to the research question above, specifically how they relate to what is already known in the professional development field and how they suggest avenues to new knowledge. I focus mainly on participants' self-perceptions of expertise, the part that affect played in their learning journeys, and the CPD components I have interpreted as contributing most to their learning. These are discussed in the light of a relevant literature, including the most recent suggestions to emerge from the House of Commons Education Committee – *'Great teachers: attracting, training and retaining the best'* (2012; HCEC). For each specific theme, I consider my study's implications for those who design and lead teachers' professional development.

### **Self-perceptions of expertise**

It was outside the purview of this study to directly examine any impact participating teachers might have made on their pupils' literacy achievement. Naturally it is hoped that the CPD *did* concomitantly raise attainment (*Figure*



2.1). Several *RR/IPD* participants were obviously pleased with the accelerated progress made by their struggling readers, while Eva and Heather grew more convinced of the worth of the *SSP* classroom programme. A sense of satisfaction is important because pupils' improvement is likely to have invigorated a hunger for learning in their teachers and built confidence (Hargreaves & Fullan 2012), as shown in Chapter Four.

In their survey of the literature concerning teaching expertise or outstanding teaching, the House of Commons Education Committee (2012) found that defining the qualities associated with outstanding teaching was complex. Despite this, the committee remains persuaded of the superior value of expert teachers –

...students taught by such teachers were more likely to participate in further education, to attend better colleges, to earn higher salaries, and to save more for retirement; they were also less likely to have children as teenagers (HCEC 2012, p.18).

However, in the current study after almost a year's advanced learning, the participants diverged in their individual *self*-perceptions about personal and professional progress made. Rather these seemed to depend to a large extent on their understanding of 'expertise' – several perhaps assuming it means 'being perfect in every way'. Some –

- seemed to reject the notion of expertise, a sentiment having the potential to affect the participant's learning negatively e.g. through the failure of the PD leader (perceived expert) to meet expected standards in some way (e.g. Leila)
- were precluded from thinking of themselves as expert by a perspective brought with them into CPD e.g. perfectionism (Heather), while others held both ideas in tension i.e. they understood themselves to be developing specific expertise, but remained frustrated by their imperfections or perceived inadequacies (e.g. Kate)
- were aware of increasing proficiency in the specialist field, were enthusiastic about what they had learnt and exuded new energy, but

remained hesitant about adopting the expert label, perhaps alert to the responsibilities it is perceived as carrying (e.g. Linda, Peter and Kalvinder)

- believed themselves to be experts already or to be developing expertise in the specialist area through the mediation of current or past CPD and were enjoying the experience (e.g. Di, Eva). The professional knowledge constructed during the year seems to have facilitated this transformation.

No participant fits into just one of these categories. Rather each emerged with a complex mix of attitudes, experience, knowledge and skills overlapping the boundaries. Their self-perceptions at the end of the CPD are important for a number of reasons –

- a growth in self-efficacy is a pleasing and validating result for teachers themselves. The ‘feel good’ factor should not be underestimated. How CPD participants feel, indicates the extent to which their learning goals have been addressed, and acts as immediate feedback to PD leaders who have designed and led the course (Guskey 2005). When adults feel confident doing their jobs there are positive effects on motivation and work ethic within the school learning community (Spillane *et al.*, 2002)
- expanding or deeper subject knowledge and the application of insightful procedures are likely to pay dividends through more powerful pedagogical interactions; schools benefit and are energised as participating teachers draw lessons from their CPD, shape policy and practice and share knowledge with others (Earley & Porritt 2009). Support from SMT from the outset and the strategic selection of CPD is essential for whole school impact (Fullan 2011) and to establish schools as learning organisations (Senge 1990; OECD 2011)
- it is likely that many participants, having engaged in effective professional development and understanding themselves to be continual learners will wish to keep on learning and practising their skills in situ (Shulman 1987). The pay-off for SMT is a professional employee who approaches tasks with confidence and expert skill – ‘She demonstrates a

consistently high standard and facility of performance and manner in novel problem-solving situations, such that her colleagues respect and value her achievements' (p. 104).

- teachers viewing themselves as developing expertise in their field and in whom there has been financial investment are more likely to remain within the teaching profession, though some may take advantage of raised confidence to seek promotion (HCEC 2012).

***What should professional development leaders note regarding teachers' self-perceptions of expertise?***

1. Establishing positive relationships with CPD participants as a preface for constructing knowledge and extending skills is a goal – 'The [expert's] high standards include their professional attitudes, and the manner in which they conduct intra and interpersonal relationships' Yelder (2004, p.78) reminds us.
2. There is no harm or loss of face in requesting assistance or support; part of the expert's role is to know from where or from whom she can garner the extra expertise required for a specific task. Kate explained - *'I've been a LITCo for 6 years. I know where to go and get it from, not that I know...'* (Kt/3/19).
3. The PD leader who continues to practise regularly in the classroom has much to offer. As a practising teacher Heather has, as she put it – *'street cred...'* (H/3/11). As a learner she was able to empathise with the teachers in her group because she was one herself; she was in prime position to promote the notion of the value of teachers' continuous professional learning in schools (Sachs 2003).

Next I consider the part played by the affect experienced by the teacher-participants as they progressed through the year.

## **Strong emotion as part of deep learning**

I did not intend to explore the emotional experiences of teachers engaged in lengthy professional learning. Indeed, 'emotional experience is notoriously difficult to investigate' (Hargreaves 2005, p.969) and 'hard to articulate' (Lupton, cited in Hargreaves 2005, *ibid.*). Changing cognitions are also problematic to access (*Appendix N - The nature of teachers' knowledge*) and observing and analysing changing theories about literacy pedagogy over time was my original research goal. Hargreaves testifies to the problems associated with asking teachers 'to talk directly about named emotions in their professional life in terms of experiences of anger, happiness, frustration, shame ...' (*ibid.*, p.969). The enabling factor in the current study seems to have been that the intense emotions were contextualised in the everyday teaching experiences and critical incidents that participants were invited to recall, describe and reflect upon as part of the data collection process, thus seemingly easier to discuss.

It is suggested that developing a sense of self-worth and personal power has become 'a fundamental purpose of all education and training efforts' (Brookfield 1986, p.283). If, as Brookfield proposes, the adult educator's role is to encourage students 'to perceive the relative, contextual nature of previously unquestioned givens' (p.284), and to consider other alternatives in the particular field (e.g. literacy acquisition methodologies), it should not be surprising if and when adults grow anxious as a result of loss of previous certainty. This study indicates that the adult educator must generate pedagogic approaches in which environments conducive to learning, reflective processes and the supportive collaboration of small groups play meaningful parts in knowledge construction.

### ***Spontaneous expression of emotion***

It was during the data analysis stage that I first noticed and then began to look purposefully for evidence of how participants were feeling as their beliefs were challenged or disputed as part of the ongoing professional dialogue. Spontaneous expressions of worth such as '*It's given me kudos...*' to describe the new standing in which Di found herself are striking, especially when juxtaposed with her next statement – '*...I've been part of the furniture for 18*

*years...there I am, one of the many staff trying to keep my head above water in a very pressured job'* (D/3/12-13). Equally salient though for different reasons is Leila's cynical outburst - *'You think they're experts; I don't believe it all'* (Le/3/13). If Leila's original view of the so-called expert had been high, there is little doubt that it was latterly demolished by disappointment.

By tracing the participants' emotional journeys (*Figure 4.2*) it becomes clear that each one experienced, to a greater or lesser extent, what Kate was pleased to term *'a roller-coaster'* of affect during the year. In the mid-CPD period, each teacher seemed to experience divergent or conflicting emotions e.g. Kate felt challenged by aspects of the CPD, but at the same time was astonished at pupil progress; Linda felt under pressure and vulnerable, but simultaneously viewed the PD as *'just fabulous'*; Di was regretful that she had not known earlier how to teach those finding reading and writing hard and doubted her skills, but was enjoying the learning. These tensions proved to be productive in terms of theoretical and pedagogical change. It is possible that the positive affect experienced concurrently outweighed the negative feelings and helped sustain them through the lowest emotional points. Any of a range of PD components (*Figure 5.1 p. 162*) had the potential to bring about change; we do not know precisely which CPD components were directly responsible for transformation unless the participant referred to them e.g. group support (Kate), professional reading (Peter), a colleague's feedback (Heather).

By the end of the year Kate felt valued and was sharing her expertise; Linda was accepting of the learner-teacher tension within; Heather was developing a tolerance of others' views; Kalvinder was proud of her achievements; Leila's self-confidence was restored and she had mastered a new resource; Di was open to continuous learning and recognised as a literacy expert in school; Peter felt energised within his school community, though his CPD experience remained unappreciated by his head teacher. However, only minor change was evident in Eva.

### ***Perfectionism***

What might be viewed as 'normal perfectionism' (Frost *et al*, 1990), a common characteristic of primary school teachers who are often 'passionate about working with children' (HCEC 2012, p.61) was expressed on a number of occasions. Perfectionism may be understood in positive terms, as a force for motivation, striving or excellence (Frost *et al.*, *ibid.*). In times of challenge, teachers' confidence may seem temporarily to diminish unless they have already identified themselves as continual learners. That sense of deskilling may have occurred in Heather's case as she sought to convince others of the effectiveness of *SSP* as a whole class programme, but found they did not necessarily agree with her ideas; and with Kate and Linda as they tried to master new procedures. I have noted also regret and guilt (Di, Heather, Peter) as part of a similar perfectionist 'syndrome'.

### ***What should professional development leaders note about affect?***

1. PD leaders should be aware that challenges to theoretical assumptions instigated during extended professional development can result in periods of self-doubt, dissatisfaction or cognitive dissonance; each experience may cause discomfort, but also invites the possibility of further or deeper learning. While many teacher-educators will consider it to be outside their remit to be directly involved, they can nevertheless seek to develop their understanding of students' experiences in the affective domain.
2. Normal perfectionism may be expected when high performers are under some stress to succeed in a new area. It is only when extreme anxiety takes over that PD leaders should be alarmed.
3. A 'safe' and supportive environment where adults can experiment with new thinking, without the anxiety of 'getting it right' is ideal for CPD where transformative learning is the goal.

In the last of these sub-sections I examine the CPD components which I have interpreted as having the greatest influence on my research participants' learning.

### **CPD components appearing to make the greatest contribution to participants' learning**

Hargreaves observes that 'When educational change occurs or is attempted, teachers do not all respond in the same way' (2005, p.967), a truism which takes account of the complexity of professional experience, the variety of transformed understandings, and affect associated with change processes evidenced during a year's intensive professional learning, as in this study. Participants were after all different ages, and at various points in their careers and had developed individual and diverse conceptions about literacy teaching and learning drawn from many years of classroom experience and through professional development. Although on paper they divided neatly into two camps – those receiving *SSP/IPD* and those participating in *RR/IPD* – at the point of engagement, a different representation of the CPD input was experienced and interpreted by each teacher. There were also features distinct to each learning environment which had the potential to affect their learning indirectly: e.g. the personality differences such as Leila and Eva encountered might have been minimised or avoided altogether if these participants had been located elsewhere; had Peter's head teacher been supportive, his experience might have been happier and more productive for school.

*Figure 5.1* illustrates the PD components operational in the small groups represented through this study and pertinent to the professional learning of its participants. Although the diagram does not attempt to differentiate the weighting of components in contributing to the whole, it is evident that individual participants experienced these to be more or less important – e.g. Linda, Kate, Kalvinder, Eva and Peter consistently remarked on the capacity of critical reflection to disentangle their thinking and shape their actions; Peter, Linda and Kalvinder each commented on the value of reading the core texts; several observe the worth of PLCs, while others praise the astute, encouraging

feedback of PD leaders. Despite the range of responses I consider three specific but interrelated components to have made most impact on the dispersed participant group that formed the focus of this case study –

- the discipline and power of regular, critical reflection, at times prompted by apparent mismatch of some sort
- the intertwining of (to them) novel theory and daily application to teaching practice
- a generous provision of time in which to enact suggested change and evaluate its impact.

### ***Critical reflection***

The development of critical reflection on professional or personal experience is proposed 'as one of the most significant forms of adult learning in which individuals engage' (Brookfield, 1986, p.98). The experiences on which Di, Linda and Heather reflected, which I framed as critical incidents - of the possibility of low teacher expectations hindering progress (Di), of the power of critical reflection to challenge assumptions and reveal pedagogy requiring modification (Linda), of enhanced awareness of the complexity of adult facilitation and the need for tolerance (Heather) – were demonstrably important to those participants (*Figure 4.3*). Critical reflection provided a vehicle for considering and drawing power from their experiences. Peter too was convinced that his constant reflection before, during and after teaching interactions was leading to more finely-tuned instructional decisions and enabling him to *teach* reading, as opposed to simply hearing readers. Their joint experiences illustrate how adult 'learners are encouraged to examine the assumptions underlying the acquisition of skill, to consider alternative purposes...' (*ibid.* p.17), perhaps in contrast to training models in which they had previously participated.

Referring not to CPD, but to the impact of her involvement as a research participant, Eva's comments are in contrast disquieting, though perhaps typical of busy professionals - '*For the first time in my whole life I've actually sat down*



*and questioned why I do things. Internally I know...and move on...but usually I'm in a rush. It's given me an opportunity to sit down and tell myself why I do them...I am the sort of person who doesn't stop. I get worried that if I stop I'll question it, or think I can't do it...the problem with that is that you don't always do it the best way* (E/3/14). Even in this short utterance, Eva reveals her insecurity and apprehension about exploring basic assumptions - seemingly in case she had not done it *'in the best way'*. Indeed the phraseology – *'It's given me an opportunity to...tell myself why I do them...'* seems to indicate a mind closed to alternative action. Eva's chances for reflective practice were minimal during the CPD period, partly due to the nature of the professional input, but also because of the poor relationship established with the LA consultant. All professional lives risk loss if reflective practice is not encouraged or built into a regular pattern. Berliner notes that it is not solely experience that makes a difference to teachers' effectiveness, but also the time spent reflecting constructively on those experiences (1988).

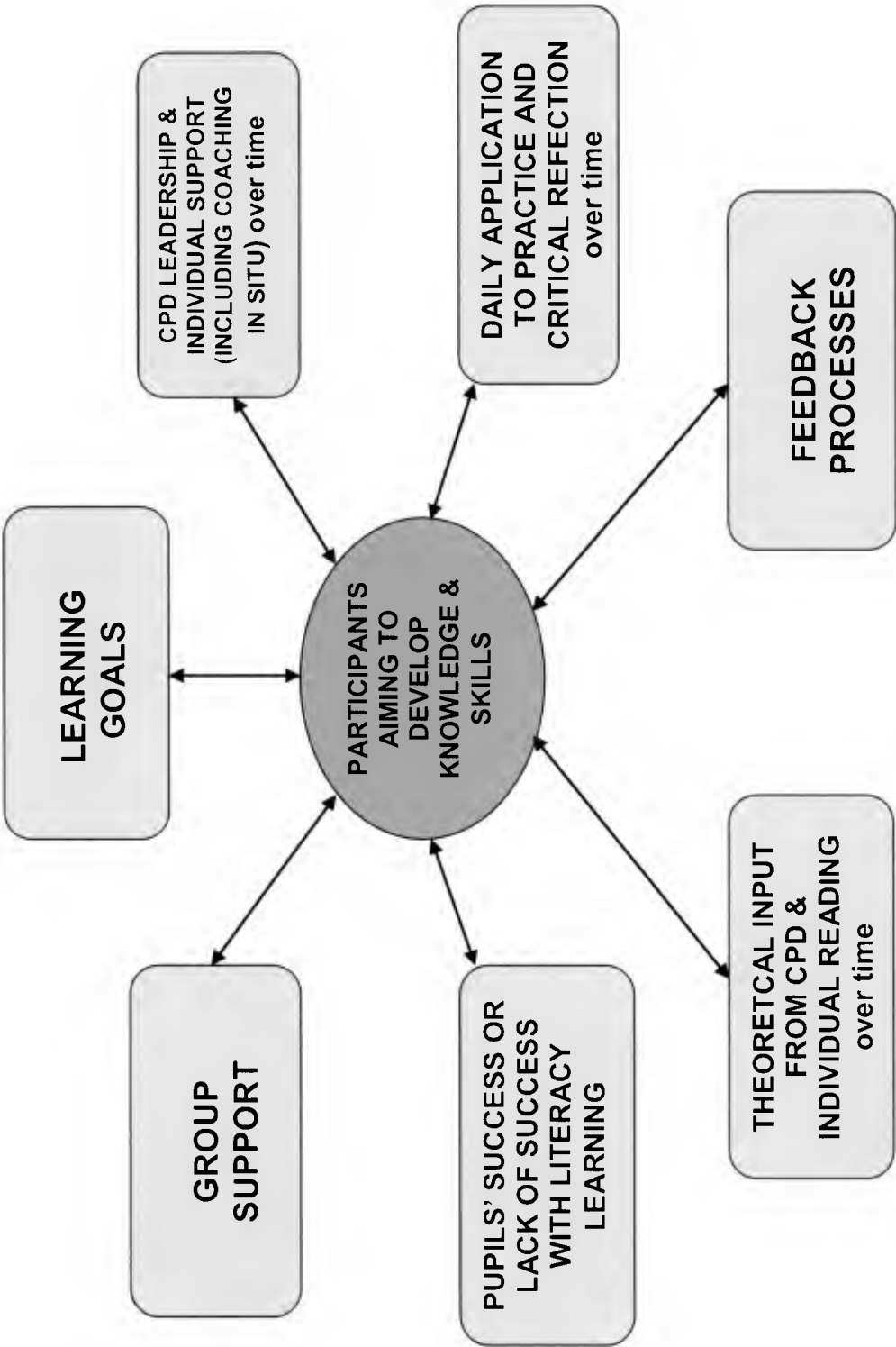
### ***Weaving together theory and practice***

It is Kate who most epitomised the benefits of interwoven theory and practice, identifying this as her preferred learning approach. Her struggle to reconcile apparently conflicting pedagogy was enacted in the context of daily teaching, thus she had regular opportunities to observe what was happening (*Figure 2.1*). Her questions are exemplified in the following paraphrase – 'How does Mohammed<sup>71</sup> know whether it is sensible to use sound analysis on a word like 'said'? How/when will he recognise that 'said' is an irregular word and that he just has to 'know' it? How should I teach him so that he learns?' The continual interplay of theory and practice, the testing of one against the other through which Kate and others could refute, contest, confirm and/or consolidate what was being taught theoretically created a powerful PD model (Garet *et al.*, 2001; Darling-Hammond & Richardson (2009).

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<sup>71</sup> Mohammed was a pupil taught by Kate

Figure 5.1: The development of participants' self-perceptions of knowledge & skills was influenced by a range of PD components operating reciprocally as they set their sights on their learning goals. The journey extends beyond the CPD itself...



In Leila's classroom the reality of some pupils unable to sustain the pace expected from *Letters and sounds* caused a near impasse. Leila's commitment to her pupils above all, obliged her to increase and adapt the instructional provision to ensure success. The ability to re-present material, adapted and tailored to pupils' level demonstrates her effectiveness (Hattie 2003). Ultimately she seemed convinced of the programme's efficacy, but the professional disagreement with the LA consultant remained fresh in her memory.

### ***A generous provision of time***

The CPD (four forms) featured in this study was delivered throughout an unusually lengthy period (almost 11 months)<sup>72</sup>. Where the intention is to bring about deep change in teachers' thinking and practice as in *SSP* and *RR/PD*, there is evidence that longer time periods are essential (Gersten *et al.*, 2000). Arguing for CPD effectiveness, Opfer *et al.*, (2011) note that considerable time is required, since teacher change is not linear or sequenced, but rather 'entangled' (p. 451). However, longer PD implies increased expense and since schools are now entirely responsible for allocating CPD budgets, teachers may be more susceptible to the whims of head teachers when selecting professional development. Generally speaking low investment means a poor return.

Lengthy PD also demands greater effort from teachers themselves, but the time, cost and effort expended are worthwhile when results are considered - not least in teachers' satisfaction and benefits to the school community, the updating of knowledge, the retention of good teachers especially in schools in challenging circumstances<sup>73</sup>, as well as the impact on pupils' performance (*Figure 2.1*). Subsequently these results lead to better outcomes in further education, salary, wellbeing, and in society generally (HCEC 2012) - 'Investment in *existing* teachers and their development' is, as the Institute of

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<sup>72</sup> Eleven months is relatively long for school-based courses which are not accredited to a university as part of a Masters or other post-graduate qualification

<sup>73</sup> Teacher attrition is currently a problem in England. 'The Department for Education told us that "retention of teachers is low", and that "of those who are employed in the maintained sector in the first year of qualifying, 73% were still teaching in the maintained sector five years later". However, the statistics for those who began teacher training show the percentage teaching in the maintained sector five years after qualification is even lower at 52% for undergraduate routes and 57% for postgraduate' (HCEC 2012, p.39)

Education has said, crucial 'if we are serious about improving educational outcomes for young people' (*ibid.* p. 42).

However, the 'proportion of teacher time devoted to CPD in England' has been reported as 'lower than in the best-performing school systems' (Institute of Education 2007, cited in HCEC 2012, p.39). This contrasts, for example, with Finland, where teachers 'spend less time in the classroom each week than teachers in any developed country' (Hargreaves & Fullan 2012, p.51), but which maintains its near top position in international surveys of student achievement (PISA 2009).

### ***What should professional development leaders note about CPD components that work?***

The combination of these three components – the emphasis and value placed on critical reflection, theory-practice combination, with time assured for both – offers immense potential for teachers' professional learning. It is reported however that PD is not currently addressing teachers' needs in most (participating) countries (OECD TALIS 2009). While better and more targeted PD is leveraging improvement, still 'Relatively few teachers participate in the kinds of professional development which they find has the greatest impact, namely qualification programmes and individual and collaborative research' (*ibid.*p.5). It seems strange that when teachers in English classrooms are seeking to raise the standards for all and close the gap for those who are struggling, we continue to resist buying into research-based models of effective CPD.

### **Ways forward?**

In the current drive to step up improvement reflected in international surveys of student achievement and to reduce the 'tail', the coalition government (2010f) has focused on teacher education, both initial and continuing. CPD is now regarded as the 'engine of change in schools...' whose importance should not be 'underestimated' (Chapman 2005, cited in HCEC 2012, p.38). This is heartening for those who care about teachers' ongoing learning, but in times of

austerity there will inevitably be a temptation to opt for cheap (short, in-house) CPD to 'tick the box', sadly not the high-quality CPD proven to be effective and transformative (as discussed in Chapter Two) and over-burdening those who lead it.

Clearly, there is an urgent need to attract the best teachers and to retain them. Performance-related pay for those who wish to remain as classroom teachers or teaching specialists has been proposed as one way of achieving this. However, having noted the 'profound positive impact on pupils' performance' outstanding teachers can have (HCEC p.24), the complexity of distinguishing those 'outstanding' teachers was also clear to the politicians, factors such as degree class and teaching experience being judged too simplistic. Rather than proceed down this route, which is controversial and divisive, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) propose that professional capital, an amalgam of human, social and decisional capital is the solution to producing a high-quality teaching profession - teachers who together are supported throughout their professional lives to fulfil pupils' capacity. Defining the idea further, the authors suggest -

...that educational spending is a long-term investment... to reap the rewards of economic productivity and social cohesion in the next generation. A big part of this investment is in high-quality teachers... thoroughly prepared, continuously developed...able to make effective judgements using all their capabilities and experience (p.3).

This case study has demonstrated the value to teachers (and it is hoped their pupils as a consequence) of investing in and continuously developing teachers to fulfil their capabilities as professionals.

## **CHAPTER SIX Conclusion**

In Chapter Six I present a summary of the goals, research processes and study findings and examine the implications of this research for those educating teachers at an advanced level. Regarding the study itself, I discuss threats to its trustworthiness, reflect on its limitations and offer suggestions for future research in the field. Bearing in mind that the EdD is a professional doctorate, I consider how the doctoral experience has enriched my professional growth as a researcher and as a leader of professional development.

### **Study synopsis**

Adopting a social constructivist framework and a case study design as suited to my purpose, I set out to explore the impact of professional development on the personal and professional perspectives of Year 1 teachers, engaged in a year of CPD with literacy pedagogy as their focus.

I reviewed and critiqued a recent literature of teachers' professional development and argued for PD already known to enable deep or transformative learning to be accessible to teachers, so they may be fulfilled as both learners and teachers throughout lifetime careers (Shulman 1987). I stressed the connections between effective CPD, teachers' transformed theoretical perspectives and improved practice associated with enhanced pupil attainment. A literature clarifying how expertise has been understood was also considered, particularly that of teaching expertise. I noted that it has always been difficult to determine exactly what makes teachers outstanding, excellent or expert, but that there is now good evidence of the impact such teachers can make on pupils' school attainment, affecting their pupils' employment potential and lives thereafter (Hanushek & Rivkin 2006; KPMG 2009; HCEC 2012).

I used qualitative methods (semi-structured interviews, lesson observations with jointly constructed reflections following, and reflective e-journals) to collect data at

four junctures throughout the 11 month period, though e-journalled reflections were spontaneously produced within participants' own time schedules. A grounded theory type approach to analysis was adopted to explore the partially transcribed data. Two main themes are proposed as being of central importance in this study –

1. 'Expertise' as participants' explicitly expressed or implied goal; expertise exemplified in PD leadership, or through failure to demonstrate it; excellent teaching practice emulated and constantly shifting skill development by participants; and expertise as a complex construct on which participants' end of year views were mixed, especially when applied to themselves.
2. Strong positive 'affect': pleasure, self-efficacy belief, validation, motivation often parallel with negative feelings of regret, guilt, apprehension and cynicism, seemingly generated by or associated with aspects of the CPD experienced. These latter emotions were typically but not exclusively experienced about midway through the timeframe, but the reasons inferred vary amongst individual participants (*Figure 4.2*). It is tentatively proposed that the positive affect was sufficiently strong to support participants through the lowest negative phases and that it may have deepened their overall learning experience.

Participants' stories in the contexts of their working environments were told using their own voices as far as possible. Earlier studies demonstrating the effectiveness of specific CPD components to transform participants' understandings and pedagogy are confirmed e.g. –

- the use of mixed-methods approaches, combining theory and practice with coaching in situ (Garet *et al.*, 2001; Carlisle *et al.*, 2011) – (e.g. see p. 118 for Kate's self-confessed optimal approach to learning)
- the role of reflective practice to make sense of experience and to empower future action (Cranton 2002) – (e.g. see p. 112 where Linda explains how reflective practice has enhanced her teaching)

- an extended time span in which to consider, trial and appraise new pedagogy (Gersten *et al.*, 2000) – (e.g. see p. 132 where Kalvinder reflects on the potential of learning which is ‘layered’ over time).

Where one participant lacked SMT backing (Earley & Porritt 2009), it seemed difficult to extend the positive impact of CPD in school (Ofsted 2006) – (see p. 149 where Peter describes his unsupportive working context). Keltchermans’ (1996; 2005) vulnerability thesis was illustrated in the CPD experiences of Linda (see p.137), of Leila (see p.143) and Peter (see p.149) amongst others. Most participants perceived themselves differently by the end of the PD, not necessarily as ‘experts’ - although for some that was the case - but as teachers *continuing to learn* in their professional contexts (Shulman 1987; Sachs 2003) - (e.g. see p. 148 where Heather speaks of her identity as both teacher and learner). It was noted that the part-time teachers in this study (Di, Linda) or those without permanent contracts (Peter) were particularly receptive to the CPD often denied them due to their frequent position as teachers without additional responsibilities (Pedder *et al.*, 2008).

I consider that the ‘distinct contribution to the knowledge of the field of study’ (EdD Handbook 2011-12, p. 27) lies in –

1. A deeper insight into teachers’ views of themselves as developing experts as they sought, or were expected to develop expertise in the literacy learning field. Participants reacted by rejecting the concept of expertise due to disappointment in the one modelling expertise; or, due to an unrealistic understanding of the construct, they suggested that it [expertise] was unreachable for them as individuals; or following careful nurture and excellent modelling, they readily claimed the expert label for themselves; or approaching it with hesitancy, signified they understood the responsibility that comes with the descriptor, especially if continued support was not available.
2. An enhanced awareness of the involvement of the affective domain as teachers engaging in advanced learning were challenged to evaluate their theories and



practice concerning literacy acquisition. A sense of pressure emerged, variously expressed in the individuals concerned as insecurity, self-doubt, loss of self-confidence in prior skills or guilt and regret; it is indeterminable whether this stress was internally or externally imposed. A pattern of positive affect outweighing disequilibrium or negative emotion is tentatively proposed from the data, as supporting participants through the most challenging mid-year period, with the probability of strengthening outcomes.

3. A diversity of professional contexts affected participants' assimilation of their learning into everyday practice. Support from SMT was variable; but for personal resilience, the negligible back-up in one case could have easily undone the positive CPD impact, while other participants were entrusted early with too great a responsibility. The work of Porritt (2009) and Pedder *et al.*, (2008) demonstrates the requirement for senior staff to be involved in decisions regarding CPD from the start, preferably incorporating it with whole school planning in a 'logical chain' for greatest sustained effect and value for money. The part-time or temporary teachers in this study were especially appreciative of the professional learning opportunities offered through CPD. Sadly the status of part-time teachers with and without their relationship to CPD is not considered in the most recent HCEC document.

## **Perspectives on the process of research and my professional growth**

I am generally satisfied that through the methods selected to pursue the research question, I accessed rich and varied data which have proved insightful. It may have been valuable to interview participants once more, about a term after the CPD finished, to explore the nature of sustained change to participants' views, following the impetus of CPD.

From a personal and professional perspective the contribution of the research process and discipline, along with academic reading and writing has been immense and is demonstrated –

- in the provision of the stimulus of real life research around which to explore my identity as a researcher, in a gradual and supported fashion
- by affording deeper insight beyond teachers' grasp of theory and practice into what may be happening in their emotional lives. As a leader of professional development, mostly at an advanced level and extended over long periods of time, this has proved valuable.

### **Threats to the trustworthiness of this study**

Several factors in this study had potential to jeopardise its trustworthiness –

1. One drawback is the size of the participant group, allowing for only a few examples of teacher change. However, this was a case study located in specific contexts and thus not aiming at broad generalisability, but rather at deeper insights.
2. The participant group, geographically dispersed, included many teachers who could be described as 'keen'. An explanation for this phenomenon is offered in Chapter Four. This is likely to have had an impact on the data, but is nevertheless of interest in that it shows 'keen' participants still inclined towards further change, not allowing themselves the option of disengagement.
3. The teacher-participants had already started on their respective CPD by the first data collection point. This was an unavoidable, contextual constraint (*p.* 81), almost certainly impinging on access to participants' baseline views uninfluenced by the current CPD.
4. The literature on 'teacher-thinking' (*Appendix N*) reiterates the probability that the mere experience of being a research participant can shape teachers' theoretical orientations and practice behaviour and resultant data (Robson 2002), with further change ensuing as an unintended product of the research

process. The propensity for such influence is clearly high in this study and has implications for both the quality and reliability of the findings. From an alternative angle, the participants may have been further empowered by the process of involvement in the research.

5. My abilities as a neophyte researcher may have impinged on both the data collection and analytical processes. I tried to use reflexivity to identify areas of potential researcher bias, but as Ahern has said ‘...it is not possible for researchers to set aside things about which they are not aware (1999, cited in Robson 2002, p.172). Discussion with my supervisor and occasional collaboration with colleagues and EdD students offered ‘outsider’ opinions.
6. Lastly my position as a national leader in *Reading Recovery* was clearly of little consequence for those participants on the *SSP* route. However, it may have operated to incline those enrolled on *RR/IPD* towards positive appreciations of *Reading Recovery* as a literacy intervention programme (Lincoln and Guba 2007).

## **Implications for PD leaders and teacher educators**

A number of practical implications, perhaps of value for those who design or lead teachers’ professional development arise from the research evidence drawn from this study –

- fostering positive relationships and effective communication from the start is vital as a foundation on which learning is constructed. PD leaders should act deliberately to ensure their formation
- the potential for effective learning is heightened when a combination of proven professional development components act as vehicles for learning over time (*Figure 5.1*; Darling-Hammond & Richardson 2009)
- deliberately identifying oneself as an ‘expert’ is inadvisable and precludes continuous learning in oneself, possibly hindering or delaying adult learners from developing further knowledge, skills and dispositions

- a teacher-educator teaching pupils concurrent with PD leadership is well placed to empathise and be of practical support to adult learners
- awareness of the ‘human side of learning’, adult learners’ vulnerability and the possibility of fluctuating and intense emotions as part of a transformative learning process increases the PD leader’s capacity to understand and support the learner skilfully.

## **Future research**

Concerning future research I hope to address the following in the short-term –

- write an executive summary of this thesis for my organisation, the European Centre for Reading Recovery, also to be disseminated amongst my research participants
- prepare a related article for publication
- jointly lead action research related to identifying, adapting, or designing an age-appropriate literacy intervention for low attaining Year 7 academy pupils and work with their teachers to implement and evaluate.

However, the question of ‘where next’ is also appropriately addressed to politicians and policy-makers to action what is already known about effective continuous professional development without delay - ‘... the good news is that there is now a sense of urgency in politics, in the teaching profession, and also among the public about the need to get more high-quality teachers...’ (Hargreaves & Fullan 2012, p.xii). It is hoped that in some way the current study may contribute to the on-going discourse regarding the vital role of teachers’ professional development.

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## APPENDIX A      CONFIRMATORY EMAIL RE.RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

Dear \*\*\*\*,

Thank you so much for agreeing to be one of my research participants.

As we discussed on the phone, the research focus is about how, why and in what ways Y1 teachers' views about literacy acquisition change throughout almost a year of PD & linked teaching. I'll be collecting data from a group of about 10 teachers through 3 interviews. I'll also be asking you to enter some thoughts, questions and issues arising as you go through your PD year in a sort of email journal - I'll prepare a simple pro-forma. Perhaps in the spring '09, my visit could take the form of a lesson observation with a joint reflection on the lesson afterwards. I do not think that your involvement will take more than 6 hours in total throughout the year, but of course I can only estimate what time the emailing/journaling aspect might take. But I think you'll find it quite enjoyable.

All research projects are strict about following published ethical guidelines. Please be assured that all data collected by me will be stored confidentially, and anything I choose to quote in the final thesis will be anonymised - I'll work out a system of pseudonyms for all the research participants. When I first meet you, I'll bring with me a written pledge of confidentiality for you to sign as evidence that you've agreed to participate. Of course, you also have the right to opt out of the research at any time.

I shall also be writing to the Director of Children's Services in \*\*\*\* to introduce myself and request his/her permission to conduct my research in your LA. I will be requesting ethical clearance from the Institute of Education, University of London in the usual way for all research of this kind.

I'm hoping that I might interview you for the first time during the week commencing \*\*\*\*. Can you please suggest 2 possible dates that week? Would after school be best?

I look forward to meeting you & hearing from you in due course regarding a suitable date.

Best wishes,

Val

.....  
Val Hindmarsh  
Reading Recovery Trainer/Coordinator  
RR National Network  
Institute of Education  
University of London  
20, Bedford Square  
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Tel:  
[www.readingrecovery.org.uk](http://www.readingrecovery.org.uk)

**Participation in research 9/08 – 7/09** - a written pledge of confidentiality/anonymity regarding data collected, recorded & reported in thesis & in any subsequent publications

*As the sole researcher involved in this project, I assure participants that I will treat all contributions sensitively, in that I will -*

- *Secure data safely & anonymously*
- *Aim for faithfulness & integrity in my transcription, analysis, interpretation, reporting and dissemination of the data*
- *Use quotations only with a pseudonym*

*...according to the recommendations of the Revised Ethical Guidelines provided by the British Ethical Research Association (2004).*

*You may opt out of this research at any time.*

*Please sign below to show that you have understood and agreed to the conditions by which this individual interview (& other subsequent related data collection) is being conducted -*

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



- Introduce self
- Remind re. purpose of research
- Informal icebreaker – what d’you enjoy most about teaching children to read & write?

## **AREAS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **1. ENVIRONMENT FOR LITERACY LEARNING**

- Talk about class environment for literacy, what’s important?
- Talk about the importance of the various strands of the revised primary framework in class timetable. PROMPT – speaking, listening, reading, writing?
- How are these interlinked?

### **2. QUALITY FIRST TEACHING**

- What are your main teaching emphases?
- What do you think makes for QFT in literacy teaching?
- PROMPT – if you were observing a lesson, what would you be looking for?

### **3. TEACHING APPROACHES**

- Describe approaches used in your teaching of literacy
- PROMPT – shared reading/writing, guided reading, independent reading, reading at home...
- Where did you learn about these approaches?
- How would you evaluate them?

### **4. LITERACY BEHAVIOURS**

- When children come to you at beginning of Y1, what do you expect them to be doing in terms of literacy development?
- PROMPT – describe their reading behaviours...imagine if leading guided reading what you would be hearing/seeing?
- What about writing?

### **5. PROMPTING, PROBLEM-SOLVING, CONTINGENT TEACHING**

- When children are reading & they come to an unknown word, what do you expect them to do?
- What do you do?
- How would you prompt them? PROBE
- What happens if no response? PROBE
- What about other strategies?
- What else do you teach for? PROBE
- And in writing?

## 6. PHONICS

- What's the place of phonics teaching in your timetable? What scheme?
- What does a session consist of?
- How is it working? Why do you think that is?
- Is it working for all children?
- How did you teach phonics before? PROBE
- What's changed in your understandings about emerging literacy since the Rose Review & the new primary framework?
- What other elements in the teaching of literacy have become significant to you? PROBE
- Or changed/consolidated your viewpoints?

## 7. ASSESSMENT

- How do you make assessments of young children's literacy?  
PROMPT – to resources, NC levels, QCA, informal running records etc
- How do you judge progress is being made?  
PROMPT – by the end of the school year..?

## 8. BOOK SELECTION

- How do you select books for children?
- What features are you looking for in children's books?
- Do children transfer their knowledge of phonics into reading contexts?

## 9. STRUGGLING READERS

- What's holding struggling readers them back?
- What's your experience of helping &/or success with 'slow' readers?

## 10. RECENT CPD

- Talk about & reflect on any CPD you have been involved in recently re. early literacy focus? PROBE – what did you learn?
- How was the PD mediated....? PROBE – PPT? Activity? ...
- How do you think you learn best at CPD sessions? PROMPT...suggest various learning routes

## 11. CURRENT CPD

- What sort of CPD are you expecting this year?
- What are your expectations when you go for a CPD session?

## 12. PERSONAL

- teaching experience, school role(s) & responsibilities
- ask if they can find out for next time: school context – no. on school roll, socio-economic status, % SEN, % EAL, KS1&2 English results, literacy interventions in school, frequency & form of LA support for literacy teaching/learning

**Reflective e-journal**

Date of PD: .....

Purpose of PD: .....

PD mediated by: .....

-----  
Reflecting on *how children learn literacy* (reading and/or writing),  
on *how I'm teaching literacy* (reading and/or writing, and *what I'm*  
*learning about teaching literacy* (reading and/or writing) ...

1. I've learnt...

2. I understand this better or differently now because...

3. My questions or puzzles or objections...

## APPENDIX E (SAMPLE) SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW (SECOND)<sup>74</sup>

- Thank for any e-journals or encourage to send...
- Remind re. purpose of research

### AREAS FOR DISCUSSION

1. PROFESSIONAL CAREER to date – fill in the details
2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF SCHOOL e.g. SEN%, FSM% etc (as requested on previous visit)
3. RE-CAP briefly from first interview or e-journal material sent during intervening period: You said...
4. CURRENT PD –
  - Reflect on CPD so far – PROMPT
  - What's going well? Why?
  - How is CPD mediated?
  - Which aspects are making an impact? In what ways?
  - What issues are coming up in discussion?
  - Have you changed your mind about...?
  - What's the weakest part?
  - Any specific challenges?
  - How is your practice changing? How is it helping the children?

---

<sup>74</sup> The second and third interviews were less structured than the first & each was individually prepared according to what was of greatest interest in previous interviews & in any subsequent correspondence (e.g. e-journal with the research participant). As before questions were facilitated by prompts & probes

## **APPENDIX F            (SAMPLE) SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW (THIRD)**

- **Thank for e-journals sent**
- **Remind re. purpose of research**

### **AREAS FOR DISCUSSION**

RE-CAP briefly from lesson observation & reflection & e-journal material sent during intervening period : You said...PROBE...

#### **THIS YEAR'S PD –**

- What has it consisted of?
- Reflect on CPD so far – PROMPT
- What's been the impact of CPD on your theory of early literacy acquisition? PROMPT
- What's been the impact of CPD on your practice? PROMPT
- Which aspects of PD have been most helpful?
- Why?
- Thinking about leading CPD? Any specific challenges or difficulties?
- How do you think your work has impacted on staff in this school?
- What issues are coming up for action?
- Have you been able to work out the CPD principles which motivate your work?
- What drives you?
- Where do you see yourself professionally?

#### **LITERACY BEHAVIOURS**

- When listening to a Y1 pupil read aloud, what do you expect to see & hear?

#### **PROBLEM-SOLVING**

- When children are reading & they come to an unknown word, what do you expect them to do?

#### **PERSONAL- fill in the details**

- Hobbies
- Age group – 20-30, 30-40, 40-50
- What's been the impact of having me visit & interviewing over a period?

#### **THANK YOU**

# APPENDIX G (SAMPLE) READING ECOVERY LESSON OBSERVATION - LINDA (teacher) & CURTIS (pupil)

NAME: Curtis=child ( C ); Linda=teacher (T); KEY: P=prompt, M=meaning, S=structure, V=visual info, SC=self-corrects  
 Items highlighted in yellow were triggers for discussion after the lesson  
 Lesson focus: problem solving using visual information  
 Background info supplied: very troubled home circumstances; Curtis is 'very tired'

DATE: 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2009

Week18

Lesson 67

FAMILIAR READING (Titles)	NEW TEXT (Intro & lit behaviour)	STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES ON TEXT		LETTER WORK, BREAKING, WORD WORK AND ANALYSIS
		Observed	Prompted	
<b>Rubbish!</b>	<b>The Mouse-deer and the Crocodiles</b> T – 'You have a quick look' C – 'I'm reading all this?' T – 'What's the story about?' T – introduces by summarising, using M; occasionally to word level eg 'delicious'; T led interaction, C interpreting pics; T persisting with Q/A e.g. 'They went over in twos.' Can you count in twos? Can you see where it says that?' TP for inference came called P to meaning living loved - P to word endings Book language impeding; T - 'Trap that word' at 'because' T - 'What could that word be?' Used card to scroll down – why?	Fluent; some phrasing; not expressive SC – using S – <u>themselves</u> T praised fluency	P – 'Make it sound exciting' T praised fluency T returned to this – <u>why?</u>	Th, Bb, Dd – slow Letter sort & saying sounds – what is the purpose? P- 'Speed up' Timer used - <u>why?</u>
<b>Josie &amp; the Puppy</b>		Sounds unnatural; lacks rhythm; paced nevertheless; some phrasing; occasionally slows down – <u>why?</u> Possibly at strangeness of idioms. C- smiling at humour. SC little words <u>how</u> <u>put</u> out, picked, <u>called</u> , <u>come</u> SC came		Letters for 'house' are jumbled up  C – re-constructed 'house' T - made 'mouse' C - recognised 'ou' C – constructed 'mouse' (see new book) C – constructed 'out'  No Taking Words Apart While reading - <u>why?</u>
<b>RR – Ship-shape</b> BL 17-18 – see record  80% accuracy (hard) Issues= some HFWs not known; words with 'the' as root are problematic; plural 's' is being missed; T praised for good phrasing & taught after RR for plural endings				

WRITING			COMMENT ON ANY PART OF THE LESSON
MESSAGE COMPOSED	CONSTRUCTING WORDS, GAINING FLUENCY	CUT-UP STORY, SPACE, CONCEPTS, SEQUENCE AND PHRASING	
Re-tell of The Ugly Duckling; TP for story; monotonous response; sentence shaped by T		C – saying words but not reading; i.e. has memorised (& also lost interest) – <b>talk about</b>	
Mother	C – ‘I used a capital’ T used 4 phoneme boxes; C wrote mouthr; T sounded out; C yawned; ‘mother’ co-constructed; C had to be reminded re. finger spacing – <b>reflect</b>	T split ‘a/n’ apart – <b>why?</b> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
duck	dukc. is written into story – <b>why?</b> duck T – ‘Does that look right?’ C – ‘Oh, other way’	T re-formed as ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
found	C changed word to ‘had’; T ‘Is it that?’ TP to continue story ...	to demonstrate phrasing – <b>why?</b>	
an	✓		
egg.	<u>eg.</u> is written into story egg T – ‘Does that look right? It’s almost right. How many ‘g’ does it have?’ TP to longer sentence, then ‘leave it.’		

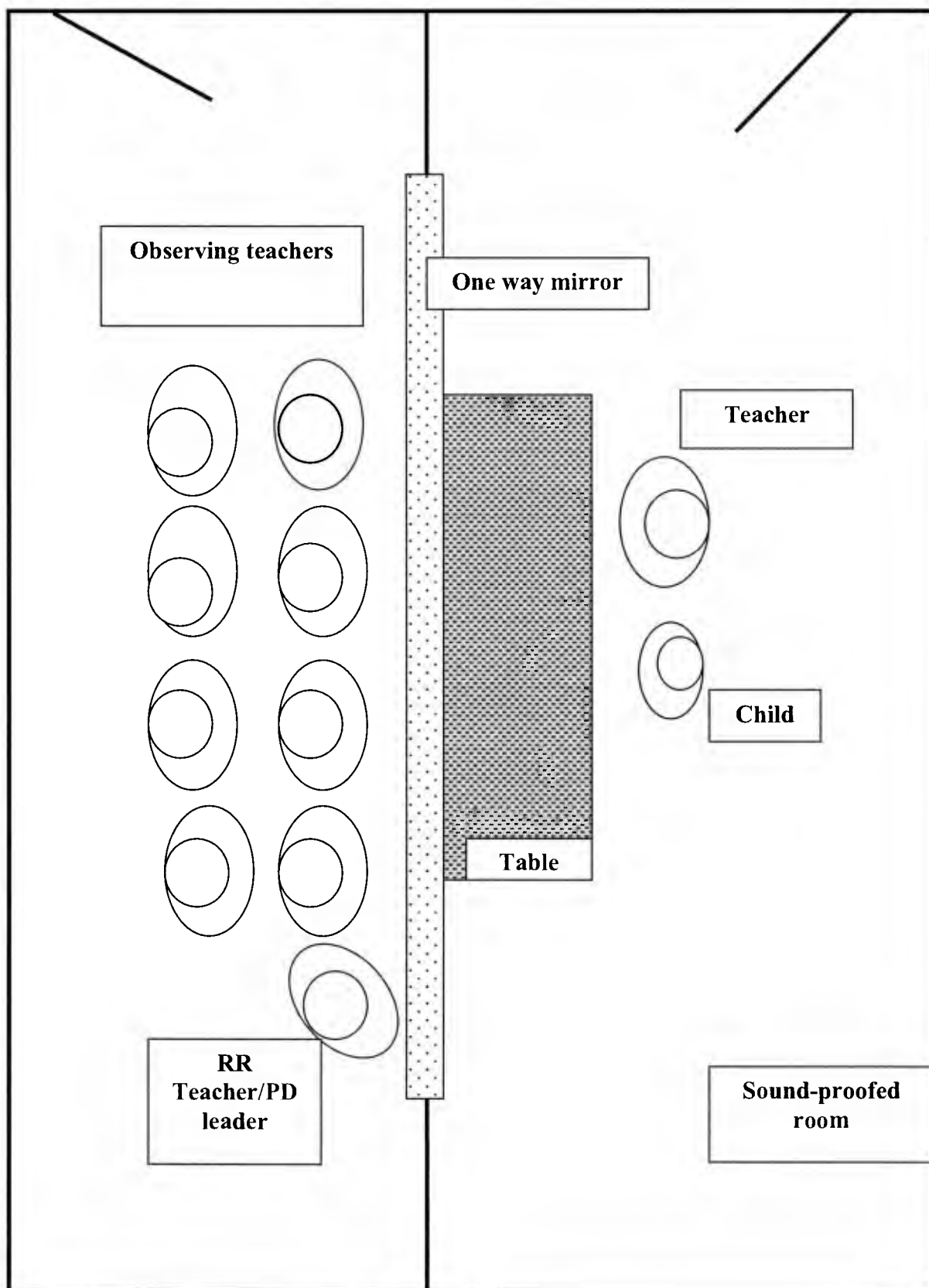
## APPENDIX H (SAMPLE) NOTES FROM CO-CONSTRUCTED REFLECTION AFTER LESSON WITH LINDA

Linda taught Curtis who was near discontinuation of his RR programme, but for whom she was now feeling some concern, namely that he could have 'coasted' (Li/LO/8)<sup>75</sup> up to BL18 and had not yet developed sufficient viable strategies to work our new words independently. Linda was full of self-doubt – that she hadn't chosen the 'right' books or used the right prompts to assist him contingently. 'He's my guinea pig: I've never been here before....not in an accelerated programme' (Li/LO/8). Curtis was a child who has lacked oral language experience, a trait most clearly evident in the lack of pitch and inappropriate stress as he read aloud. The lesson was focused on fluency and phrasing in familiar reading. Linda praised instances of fluency and taught for it consistently. During both familiar reading and the running record Curtis made many errors, some of them subsequently self-corrected. An analysis of these shows that at problem-solving situations he tended to use initial letters to solve, but little subsequent phonic information was applied (e.g. ago/a, picked/put<sup>76</sup>). Language structure in context was observed by Curtis (e.g. verbs – came/called) and the meaning of substituted words was linked (e.g. fridge/food, sailors/sea). Occasionally he noticed mismatch and semantic or additional information was called up to cross-check leading to several self-corrections. Linda was correct - Curtis was not yet using sufficient visual information to inform his first reading. When asked how he had read 'river', Curtis revealed his strategy - 'It begins with (r) and ends with (r)' (Li/LO/9). He only read one page of the new book. Why? Linda's worries concerned areas of literacy learning in which she may not have been as confident to teach or experienced – fluency and phrased reading, sound analysis, use of idiom and inference in children's books and complexity in writing. Nor would she have had the opportunity to spend sufficient time with any one individual child in a busy classroom in order to attend to these concerns in detail. She had spent her teaching career in low attaining schools in KS1 or with SEN children. It is thus likely that Curtis' reading was superior to that of children with whom she had worked before. He was presenting with literacy learning problems that she seemed powerless to sort out. Additionally Linda felt under extreme pressure to be an 'expert' in school and to ensure that her children maintained their gains.

<sup>75</sup> (Li/LO/8) indicates this quotation is from Linda, during the stimulated recall of the lesson observation and is to be found on page 8 of the transcript

<sup>76</sup> The first word is Curtis' substitution; the second is the word in text





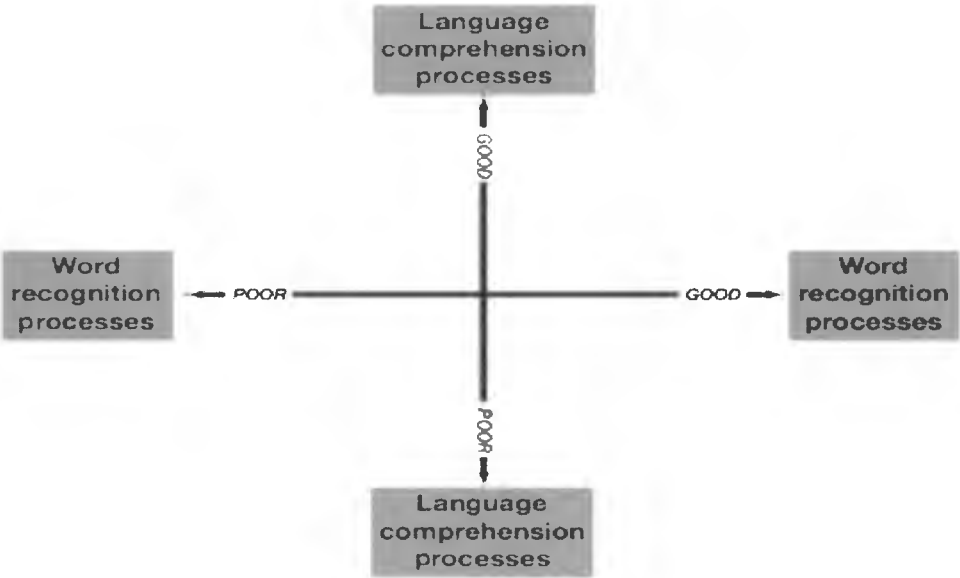
## **APPENDIX J            THE SIMPLE VIEW OF READING (Gough & Tunmer 1986, cited in Rose 2006)**

The Simple View of Reading (SVR; Gough & Tunmer 1986, cited in Rose 2006) was adopted in *The Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading* (2006) as a conceptual framework for understanding the interlinked processes of reading acquisition – word recognition and language comprehension. It is thought to reflect more accurately than the earlier Searchlights model (NLS 1998; Clay & Cazden 1990) the sequential development of skills in beginner readers, in that it stresses the pre-requisite of word recognition to enable text comprehension (Stuart, Stainthorp & Snowling 2008) rather than the simultaneous use of information sources (semantic, syntactic, visual and phonological cues checked against each other) in problem-solving situations. The acquisition of skills to link words to meaning and pronunciations - sight word recognition (lexical) and phonic decoding (sublexical) - is for that reason considered pre-eminent.

Successive government cross-party policy, developed on the basis of the SVR has considerably influenced early literacy teaching and learning since 2006. The model (*Figure App/J*) has proved to be useful for planning and implementing guided reading, as it can assist teachers in focusing literacy instruction for specific groups of children – e.g. to ensure comprehension for those who read with little regard to text meaning. Following Rose (*op.cit.*) the DFES freely distributed published materials to every primary school (*Appendix K*).

Both the SVR conceptual model of the processes involved in beginning to read and Rose's recommendations for systematic, synthetic phonics (SSP) in English classrooms have been widely accepted, though not without protest from those who consider the model to be a denial of the complexity of the reading process (e.g. Purcell-Gates 2009); others believe that the emphasis on phonics deflects from reading for meaning and reading for enjoyment (UKLA 2011).

*Figure App/J: The Simple view of Reading (Gough & Tunmer 1986, cited in Rose 2006, p. 77)*



## **APPENDIX K        LETTERS AND SOUNDS (DFES 2007): A SUMMARY**

Since *The Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading* (Rose 2006) English primary teachers have been guided towards a systematic, synthetic approach to phonics as a means of teaching pupils to read and write, and as part of a language-rich curriculum (*ibid.*).

Letters and sounds (DFES 2007) was distributed freely as a means of ensuring that every school had access to phonic materials with which to teach systematic, synthetic phonics (SSP). Some schools had already invested in alternative SSP phonics packages, but many were happy to use Letters and sounds.

The six-phase teaching programme enables children 'to learn phonic knowledge and skills systematically from the age of 5 with the expectation that they will be fluent readers having secured word recognition skills by the end of Key Stage 1' (*ibid.*). Daily lessons, often employing a multi-sensory approach, allow for rapid progress from simple phoneme recognition, blending and segmentation of monosyllabic regular words to more complex phonemic patterns, while also allowing for the steady introduction of irregular words. Teachers follow a strict sequence of teaching in discrete sessions, though many discover creative ways to teach or consolidate phonics through collaborative and peer-assisted learning (Whitebread *et al.*, 2007). Lesson components are based on a sequence of the following procedures -

1. Revisit and review
2. Teach
3. Practise
4. Apply

Using the synthetic as opposed to analytic method (which relies on analogy from the known), taught at a brisk pace and with multi-sensory activities, pupils are said to make overwhelmingly positive responses (Torgerson *et al.*, 2006, cited in Rose 2006). Following initial lessons they 'begin to self-teach' (*ibid.*

p.19), further extending their skills through contextualised reading and consequently increasingly able to focus on text comprehension.

Most literacy theorists would support the need for *systematic* phonics to be taught in the early stages of literacy learning – ‘Specific systematic phonics programs are all significantly more effective than non-phonics programs...’ (NICHD 2000, cited in Wyse & Goswami 2008, p.693). Yet the same authorities have noted the lack of empirical research evidence for the use of *synthetic* phonics, essential when introducing national policy - ‘...however, they [phonic programmes] do not appear to differ significantly from each other in their effectiveness although more evidence is needed to verify the reliability of effect sizes for each program’ (*ibid.*). Moreover, it is likely that the effectiveness of phonics as the *prime* source of information, especially for pupils who experience difficulties with aspects of phonological awareness is diminished.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Vellutino, Fletcher, Snowling & Scanlon (2004) in a meta-analysis of hypothesised causes of ‘dyslexia’ demonstrate that children experiencing early reading difficulties frequently have primary problems with phonological awareness (letter recognition, segmentation and blending of phonemes etc)

## APPENDIX L      READING RECOVERY PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE: A SUMMARY

### ***A second chance to learn literacy***

Reading Recovery (*RR*) is an individually designed and delivered literacy intervention devised to lift the lowest attaining pupils to age-appropriate level within 20 weeks, in order to prevent long-term literacy failure<sup>78</sup>. Access to this second-chance literacy intervention is offered on the assumption that a pupil has already received good-quality first teaching, but for whatever reason has failed to make progress. The theory of reading acquisition on which *RR* is based is ‘...a theory of the construction of an inner control of literacy acts’ (Clay 2001, p.46) in continuous reading and writing contexts, quite different from an additive model involving the cumulative learning of decontextualised letters and words. During 2008-9 when this research was taking place, 77.9% children in English *RR* implementations made accelerated progress, taking 19.9 weeks on average (SD=4.9) to complete the intervention (Douëtil 2009).

### ***The Reading Recovery lesson***

Teachers plan daily 30 minute lessons capitalising on the strengths of the pupil, with each lesson comprising -

- reading of several familiar texts (easy level – 95% accuracy or above)
- a running record of yesterday’s text (ideally at instructional level – between 90 - 94% accuracy)
- letter and word work (related in some way to pupil’s current reading and writing)
- a conversation generating a ‘story’ for a short piece of writing, involving the pupil in accessing new words through phonemic awareness, or analogy, and learning to spell high frequency words
- the introduction and first read of a new, well-matched book, expertly scaffolded by an observant teacher.

The lesson components are planned to promote orchestration of the pupil’s strategic activity using semantic, syntactic and visual information for problem-

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<sup>78</sup> In the UK pupils entering *RR* are normally within the 5y 9m – 6y 3m age range (i.e. usually (but not always) in Year One at the start of the intervention)

solving in context; self-monitoring leading to self-correction when applicable; phonemic awareness, phoneme blending and segmentation to aid reading and writing and the learning of high-frequency words (often irregular) to encourage fluency. Throughout their individual lesson series, pupils continue to be taught in class in the usual way.

### ***Critique of Reading Recovery***

Criticism is often levelled at the apparent lack of explicit phonics work in *RR* lessons (e.g. Chapman *et al.*, 2001). *Reading Recovery* has been accused of encouraging pupils to 'guess' at words on the basis of semantic and/or contextual clues rather than focusing on visual information including phonics (Reynolds & Wheldall 2007; Tunmer & Chapman 2003). However, through successive iterations of its teaching manual (Clay 1979; 1985; 1993; 2005), Clay incorporated teaching procedures based on research findings about the importance of phonics in children's literacy learning – 'The child should learn about constructing words and taking words part in many places in his lessons' (Clay 2005, p.138).

### ***Professional learning in RR***

*Reading Recovery* draws heavily on Vygotskian learning theory (Clay & Cazden 1990) and is established through teachers' professional development that is purposefully designed to support individual contingent instruction of pupils who are at risk of literacy failure (Clay 2001). Instructional interactions may be verbal, non-verbal or in combination, and act as tools for 'scaffolding' new learning in the pupil's zone of proximal development (Wood *et al.*, 1976; Gaffney & Anderson 1991). Teachers are required to demonstrate effective decision-making based on their understandings of the complexity of literacy learning and a theory of the child's literacy processing to restore pupils to an age-appropriate range (Clay 2001). Both teacher-learners and pupils learn through social interaction mediated by a common language, intrinsically linked with practice.

During professional development sessions, especially while observing at the one way-mirror (*Appendix I*) teachers are encouraged to articulate their

observations, explain, justify and defend their theoretical viewpoints, with the possibility of altering or transforming prior views or assumptions. The teacher leader does not set herself up as an expert, but is rather regarded as a facilitator. In collaboration with others the potential for learners to advance their learning is created by 'inter-mental interaction' (Wells 1999) or participatory talk. The teacher engaged in PD is initially scaffolded, but gradually expands her reasoning skills. Over time conceptual change is facilitated by the cooperative thinking, joint problem-solving and constructive feedback from colleagues. The cognitive change experienced, initially socially and then individually when appropriated, enables further participation in the joint construction of knowledge. A tentative approach demonstrates the high value placed on inquiry and acknowledges the complexity of learning. It reminds teachers that decision-making is always based on hypotheses, thereafter tested out in teaching-learning activities (Lyons *et al.*, 1993). Practice is consolidated by regular engagement in a reflective process (Cranton 1996). Thus, habits of pedagogical praxis are formed - '...alternating and continuous engagements by teachers and learners in exploration, action, and reflection...' (Brookfield 1986, p.15) in cyclical processes. *Reading Recovery* teachers are encouraged to be self-directed and active learners who regard their professional learning as ongoing.



## APPENDIX M (SAMPLE) SSP LESSON OBSERVATION – FIELD NOTES

Key: text highlighted in yellow represents researcher's observations, some of which went onto trigger joint reflection after the lesson

### Phonics lesson led by Heather: 21.4.09

1. **Review & revisit** – flashcards: ai, ie, oy, ir, ue, aw, wh, ph, ew, oe, au, would, should, could (1 min; puppet; children with hands up - very keen)
2. **Teach/Revisit** – new phoneme: /zh/. Explain that Jack stole a box of treasure from the giant and gave it to his mum. 'I stole the giant's treasure box' – gasp of excitement from children. T/r/ea/sure segmented. Sound talk it! Robot arms.
3. **Practise** – blend for reading: T to demonstrate reading treasure & highlight where /zh/ comes in a word. Give children the words: television (sound talked & sound buttons) pleasure, visual, measure, usual, casual. **Read & discuss** using words in sentence context. But do they understand the concepts? Open treasure box & ask children to read word on coin (role playing with puppet & tight control) – measure. Segment for spelling: treasure
4. **Apply** – write: When can we find the treasure and measure it? Read: What can you measure for Jack? Children repeat by rote. Not whole-hearted! What do they understand by this question? Children write on little whiteboards. T encourages proof-reading of sentence on whiteboards. T asks – show me sentence. Feedback? A lot of teacher talk about 'big brains, good sitters, good listeners'.
5. **Child initiated activities (CIAs)** – 4 tables; children free to choose; activities based on reading, writing or speech & language; TA mixing with children to support
  - What can you measure?
  - Can you write what is on television?
  - What is your favourite TV programme?
  - Can you sort out the grapheme beans – ai words (from previous day)
  - Can you find the /zh/ words in the giant's egg pond?
  - What did Jack's mum say?
  - What did the giant say when he found that his treasure had gone?
  - Role play when Jack stole the treasure
  - Doll's house – Jack & his mum.
  - Puppets
6. **CIAs (above) are simultaneous with guided reading (4 children)** – the text was a letter from Jack to his mum; children asked to read letter; discussion followed; children asked to proof read for errors: a/l, steel/steal (difficult!). Children read individually in quiet voices. Perhaps they lost meaning as they searched for errors? Comprehension questions followed. Read together – T led, some not keeping pace. Children asked to highlight

capital letters & full stops. Each child asked to read a sentence. Seems fragmented session with no overall purpose.

**7. Plenary – class,** adding 'ful' to words e.g. forceful

**For discussion with Heather:**

- Overall reflection on session today?
- Where/when will they meet /zh/ again?
- How will you know it has been learnt?
- Talk about bringing in a story as lesson base...
- Do you worry about their comprehension?
- Where do the sentences come from?
- Why the CIAs?
- Objectives for GR today?
- Reflect on the group's learning today...

***What is the nature of teachers' knowledge?***

Teachers' knowledge overlaps several domains: Shulman (1986) refers to content knowledge – as subject matter, or pedagogical content knowledge relating to procedural aspects, and curricular knowledge or how subjects are approached at different levels and over time. Personal and practical knowledge are additional categories identified by Beattie (1995, cited in Fang 1996) and defined as teachers' experiential knowledge of students' learning styles, interests, needs, strengths and difficulties and a repertoire of instructional techniques and classroom management skills. This extra construct seems to draw from both theoretical knowledge and from pedagogy.

***What do teachers' beliefs comprise?***

Teachers' beliefs are variously referred to as cognitions, thinking, knowledge or understanding (Huberman & Miles 1984). Pre-planning of lessons, interactive reflections during instruction leading to on the spot modification of plans, embedded general beliefs about teaching and learning and reflections on 'instructional repertoire...' (Kagan 1990, p.420) come under the heading of 'beliefs', making research in this field 'ambiguous' (*ibid.*). Traditionally conceptualised as implicit, pre-service assumptions, teachers' beliefs are frequently carried over from teachers' own school experiences. They are said to be relatively stable, often upheld tenaciously, shaped by many hours in classrooms according to Kagan (1992).

***The challenge of accessing teachers' beliefs***

Accessing teachers' cognitions or 'getting inside teachers' heads' (Feiman-Neuser & Floden 1986, cited in Elbaz 1990) can be challenging: there are difficulties with definitions (as above) and problems when attempting to capture invisible thoughts and beliefs which are often held unconsciously (Kagan 1990; Mezirow 1995). Teachers' professional knowledge is considered to be largely tacit – 'We know but

cannot tell' (Loughran 2007, cited in Berry 2009, p.307). Examining thinking can be problematic thus creative ways are found to facilitate it - 'Thinking embedded in collaborative practical activity must to a significant degree take the form of talk, gesture, use of artefacts, or some other publicly accessible mediational instrumentality...' (Engeström 1994, p.45).

Since *knowing* and *doing* are quite different, it is conceivable that one may know much (content knowledge), overtly or tacitly (Eraut 2000), but remain inept at passing it on to another. This disposition is usually attributed to the complexity or personal nature of teachers' knowledge base, or to '...its deeply embedded nature' (*ibid.*) and the relatively isolated environment of the teaching experience (Berliner 2001).

However, it is also surmised that teachers may hesitate to express views perceived as unpopular (Kagan 1990). Although this supposition tends to diminish the notion of teachers' professionalism and right to a political and/or dissenting voice, it may well represent an accurate picture of how teachers sometimes respond to reform initiatives or innovation with which they disagree.

Even if there is success accessing teachers' beliefs, there is no guarantee that new understandings will be evidenced in the classroom, as they may not be fully formed or transferred to practice (Richardson *et al.*, 1991).

### ***Changing teachers' beliefs is a slow process***

Changes in practice and growth in teachers' understanding are not quickly or easily attained, an aspect of CPD iterated during the OISE Evaluation of the National Strategies - 'Changing teaching is a long, multi-stage process that involves awareness, planning, implementation and instruction,' (Earl *et al.*, 2000, p.14). Learning can be slow and uncertain for teachers and indeed some elements of knowledge are more easily changed than others (Borko 2004). Teachers' ideas seem to be mainly influenced empirically e.g. by observing colleagues' practice

and reflecting on experience and through the powerful mediums of PD described in Chapter Two. Gradually those influences filter through teachers' belief systems and are absorbed in unique pedagogies -

The literature on conceptual change in many different knowledge domains consistently suggests that personal beliefs function as the filter and foundation of new knowledge (Posner, Strike, Hewson and Gertzog 1982) – some congruent, some brittle (cited in Kagan 1992, p.75).

***Which comes first – changed belief or changed practice?***

The question of whether teachers' beliefs follow changes in practice or change prior to altering practice may depend on whether the change is externally or internally mandated, or initiated by teachers' themselves. Richardson & Placier (2001) examined change in teachers' beliefs and practices in response to readings and discussions and found that teachers often changed their beliefs prior to changing their practice or changed their beliefs interactively with changes in practice. The change pattern may also relate to how teachers' cognitions are accessed originally: teachers' views articulated during interviews or through questionnaires cannot or may not always be reflected in classroom practice, due to the complex and challenging nature of the teaching/learning context.

## **APPENDIX O EXCELLENT READING TEACHERS CHARACTERISTICS** (IRA, cited in Griffith *et al.*, 2010, p.28)

IRA's (2000) Excellent Reading Teachers Characteristics -

'Excellent reading teachers share several critical qualities of knowledge and practice -

1. They understand reading and writing development, and believe all children can learn to read and write.
2. They continually assess children's progress and relate reading instruction to children's previous experiences.
3. They know a variety of ways to teach reading, when to use each method, and how to combine the methods into an effective instruction program.
4. They offer a variety of materials and texts for children to read.
5. They use flexible grouping strategies to tailor instruction to individual students.
6. They are good reading 'coaches' (that is, they provide help strategically)'.

**OFSTED look for –**

‘An outstanding teacher generally has exceptionally strong subject knowledge and exceptionally good interactions with students and children, which will enable them to demonstrate their learning and build on their learning. They will challenge the youngster to extend their thinking to go way beyond the normal yes/no answer. They will be people who inspire, who develop a strong sense of what students can do and have no limits in terms of their expectations of students.’

**TEACH FIRST personal attributes –**

- Humility, respect and empathy
- Interaction
- Knowledge
- Leadership
- Planning and organising
- Problem-solving
- Resilience
- Self-evaluation

Extracts from ‘*Great teachers: attracting, training and retaining the best*’ (House of Commons Education Committee 2012, p.20).

*Leila - 'At college they tell you and you just believe everything' - what is she saying here? What does this relate to? It seems to refer to past but also present experience with the consultant.*

*1. She's adapting her teaching to the small group that is being left behind -good inclusive practice. Progress or evidence of children's understanding is the big indicator of more effective teaching. She seems to be saying that she's not going to do what she's been told to if she doesn't agree.*

*2. Doubt resulting from her observation of variance between what is espoused & the evidenced reality) & self-doubt seem to be critical to her learning & are causing her to question e.g. whether children must learn 4 sounds a week (but some can't). Children must move on every week (even if they haven't picked up what is being taught). She seems angry at a very different reality from the text book version. It relates to her other comment about experts... But she is also doubting her own teaching expertise as a result...*

*3. Leila seems alone in her PD; she has little contact with her PD leader and none with the other participants. No literature is read except online planning. Her apparent problems with a small number of children are not satisfactorily addressed by the leader or by the PD*